# Church Folks

Ian Maclaren

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# Church Folks

# CHURCH FOLKS

BEING PRACTICAL STUDIES
IN CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

*By*

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"THE MIND OF THE MASTER," "THE CURE OF SOULS," ETC.

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# Church Folks.

## I.

### How to Make the Most of a Sermon.

Unto the success of a sermon two people contribute, and without their joint efforts the sermon must be a failure. One is the preacher and the other is the hearer, and if some art goes to the composition of the sermon, almost as much goes to its reception.

In the art of the hearer the first canon is practice, for it is a fact that the regular attendant not only hears more but also hears better than the person who drops into church once in two

months. No doubt if the preacher has lungs of brass, and the hearer is not stone deaf, a casual can catch every word on the rare occasion when he attends, although for the past six weeks he has worshipped at home or made the round of the neighboring churches. There is some difference, however, between a steam whistle which commands its audience within a given area without distinction, and a musical instrument to which ears must be attuned for its appreciation.

### The Chief Condition of Successful Hearing.

The voice of a competent speaker is not so much sound merely, but is so much music, with subtle intonations and delicate modulations; his pronunciation of a word is a commentary upon it; his look as he speaks is a translation of it; his severity is softened by the

pathos of his tone; his praise is doubled by its ring of satisfaction. A stranger's ear is not trained to such niceties; it is the habituated ear which reaps the full sense.

Besides, every speaker worth hearing creates his own atmosphere, and one cannot hear with comfort until he is acclimatized. The speaker has his own standpoint, and one must be there to think with him; he passes every word through his own mint, and one must be familiar with the stamping. Casuals are puzzled by the man, but his familiar friends are at home with him. "He said this or that," the casual urges. "Oh, yes," answers the expert, "but with him that means something more." Perhaps the chief condition of successful hearing is to know the speaker, his working axioms, his special devotion, his unconscious prejudices, his characteristic message, and this knowledge can only be got by continual hearing.

### When a Minister Reveals Himself.

It is not in private that a minister really reveals himself; it is in the pulpit. When you met him on Saturday upon the street he spoke of the weather or about a book, hiding himself, as every real man does, in ordinary intercourse; on Sunday, without knowing, he drops his mask till you can read his character and have seen his soul. Of course, some men are as veiled in preaching as in conversation, but in that case their hearers have lost nothing; there is no individuality to reveal, only a lay figure beneath the conventional garments of the day. It takes one month of constant wear to break in a pair of heavy walking boots, and at least six months to fit into a new study chair; a year of constant attendance is required to place one on easy terms with a preacher, and then the advantage must not be thrown away.

### Scottish Congregations Which Appear Asleep.

The second canon is attention, which comes to this, that a hearer shall make his body serve his soul in church. People may be listening when they sit motionless with their eyes shut, and many explain that they have simply withdrawn themselves from a disturbing environment, but in that case they ought to give some sign of life at intervals, if only to reassure the preacher and to save their neighbors from the sin of uncharitable judgment. There are congregations in Scotland where one-third of the audience appears to be asleep, but the preacher is afterward assured that these very hearers could give the best account of his sermon and are the keenest critics of his orthodoxy. They do not, however, form an exhilarating spectacle for the preacher, and his temptation will often be to say something

heterodox in order to compel them to give some sign of interest.

If any one, on the other hand, is afflicted by the evil spirit of restlessness which is ever impelling him to fidget and sometimes drives him beneath the book-board, then this man ought either to master his tormentor by practice at home, or he should be placed in some special seat where he may hear but not be seen.

### Audiences of Studied Negligence.

Nor does it, in any way, assist sympathetic hearing for a man to fold his arms and throw himself into his seat as one who knows what is before him and will endure to the end without flinching. A preacher may at any time refer to the noble army of martyrs, but he does not wish to address a body of martyrs in his own church. Nothing will more certainly discourage a preacher,

till the words break on his lips and he can hardly maintain grammar, than an audience in every attitude of studied negligence, and nothing will more certainly inspire him than one unbroken expanse of intelligent faces.

## When a Sermon Can be Heard Aright.

Next comes concentration, and here the trained hearer has an enormous advantage. If it be difficult for some people to listen, it is ten times harder for other people to follow, for it is evident a person may listen and not follow. Very few are accustomed to think about the same thing, or, indeed, to think about anything, for thirty minutes; after a brief space their interest flags and they fall behind; they have long ago lost the thread of the preacher's argument and have almost forgotten his subject. The sermon which suits such

a desultory mind is one of twenty paragraphs, each paragraph an anecdote or an illustration or a startling idea, so that wherever the hearer joins in he can be instantly at home. Sensible people ought, however, to remember that a series of amusing lantern-slides and a work of severe art are not the same, and if any one is to expound the gospel of Christ worthily he must reason as he goes and ask his hearers to think. The chain may be of gold, but there ought to be links securely fastened together, and a hearer should try them as they pass through his hands. If one does not brace himself for the effort of hearing a sermon he will almost certainly finish up by complaining either that the preacher was dull or that the discourse was disconnected. No sermon is worth hearing into which the preacher has not put his whole strength, and no sermon can be heard aright unless the hearer gives his whole strength also.

### What a Preacher is Entitled to.

My fourth canon of successful listening is candor, and a preacher is entitled to ask this quality of his hearer. If a juryman enters the box with his mind made up regarding the case, then it is vain for any counsel to speak, and there is no hope of securing a just verdict. If a person enters church with hopeless prejudices in the matter of truth, then it does not matter how able or how eloquent the preacher may be, he cannot get access to that hearer's mind. The honest hearer is one who is willing to consider every argument and to revise every conclusion, except, of course, those half dozen outstanding verities which no preacher of intellectual sanity would ever attack and which every religious person accepts as final. There are, however, many sides of truth which a hearer may never have seen and many applications of truth which

may never have occurred to him. He ought to be willing to follow the preacher as a guide and at least to judge the prospect for himself: he ought to be willing to consider how far the preacher's word affects his own conduct.

Nothing stimulates a preacher and gives him greater confidence in expounding truth than the assurance that every word which he speaks from an honest mind will be considered by honest hearers. He feels that if they agree with him, it will be because they have been convinced; if they disagree with him, it will be because in their judgment he has failed to make good his plea.

### The Atmosphere Killing to a Church.

And the last canon is charity, which blesses twice—the man who preaches

and the people who hear. No atmosphere is so injurious to the hearer, and none so trying to the preacher, as petty criticisms and malicious interpretation. People ought to hear in a large and generous spirit, remembering that the preacher is a man of like frailties with themselves, and remembering that no man ought to be judged except on the length and breadth of his teaching. It is possible that one day he may be dull —it is a matter of the weather; it is possible another day that he may not be sweet-tempered—it is a matter of digestion; the hearers ought to make great allowances for one who has to work with the double instrument of a fickle mind and an imperfect body. Hearers should lay it down as a rule that no man ever can be equal except he travel on the plane of dreary commonplace.

## The Preacher Who is Always the Same.

It is said that once a deputation from a vacant congregation went to hear a middle-aged doctor of divinity, a man of placid disposition and uninspired mind. After hearing him preach a sermon which he had prepared on the Monday forenoon preceding, and the like of which he could have prepared every forenoon following, they asked one of his congregation whether that was a fair specimen of the doctor's preaching. "Ye may," he said, "depend on that; hear him once ye hear him ever; he's aye the same; there are no ups and downs with the doctor." Certainly he never descended below the even road of bare common sense, and certainly he never ascended to the heights of inspiration. Many preachers find that every fourth or fifth Sunday, as the case may be, they fail, beating

the ground with their wings, and not being able to rise. Their congregations will receive ample compensation on the Sunday following, and they will enjoy the top of the mountain, with its far view and breezy atmosphere, all the more on account of the valley wherein they walked and were shut in.

### The Cruelest Act of the Pew.

One of the cruelest acts of injustice on the part of the pew is to suspect the preacher of personality and to read unthought-of meanings into his words. Should a preacher describe with much minuteness of detail and a certain keenness of feeling any particular sin, his hearers ought to be certain that he is describing his own sin, for, indeed, no man knows any sin as he knows his own.

It is best for the hearer to believe that the preacher is moved simply in everything he says by loyalty to truth

and by the love of his fellow-men, and that no one regrets so bitterly as he does any shortcoming in exposition or any defect in the spirit of his teaching. His desire is to convince and to comfort; his one reward the spiritual help which he affords to the souls of his fellow-men. If by his words any brother man is strengthened to do his work with more faithfulness during the week, or is succored amid the trials of life, then he has not failed in his calling and does not regret his sacrifices. His endeavor is the highest known in human life and his labor is the hardest. Unto him therefore should be extended the utmost sympathy, and for him there should be offered the most constant and earnest prayer.

### Listening Without Practice No Use.

No hearer has given a preacher a fair chance if he forgets what has been said

at the church door, or if he treats a sermon as an essay to be discussed. The church is not a place of recreation nor a debating society: it is a school, where the chief lesson of knowledge is taught —how to live. The instructions are given from the pulpit; the demonstration must be made at home. Above all religions, Christianity is experimental and practical—a set not of rules, but of principles which must be wrought out in the details of each man's life. That preacher has understood his duty and done it who moves a man to action, and that hearer has made the utmost of a sermon who has proved it in practice. It is not necessary that the preacher be didactic, saying as to children, "You must do this or that," which is insufferable and ineffectual. The best preachers are suggestive, making men ashamed of low living by the exposure of sin, and moving men to nobility by exhibiting the beauty of

virtue. The honest hearer does not do good afterward because he was told, but because he must. He has opened his heart to the message of truth as soft spring soil for the seed, and in this hospitable home the seed springs up.

### The Chief End of Every Sermon.

Above all things, the Christian preacher makes two demands, and both can be justified only by the obedience of the hearer. He invites his audience to become disciples and servants of Jesus; he magnifies the Master's grace and power; he assures his fellow-men that to trust in Jesus and to follow Him is to live. If the hearer argues and debates about Jesus, he can never arrive at the facts, and he has not dealt fairly with the preacher. Let him put the matter to the test and make the adventure with Jesus as did the first Christians. If he does, then he will be able to judge the preacher; if not, he ought

to be silent. Never has there been more futile criticism than that of hearers who will not believe: such people wander round the outside of the cathedral and discuss the painted glass, which can only be understood from the inside. Another appeal of the Christian preacher is for sacrifice, and it is his duty to magnify the glory of unselfish living. He asks people to do what is hard and unattractive, and promises them a gain which is spiritual and unseen. It lies upon the hearer to verify this commandment for himself, and to find out whether serving others, and not one's self, does make one happier and stronger.

The chief end of preaching is, after all, inspiration, and the man who has been set on fire is the vindication of the pulpit. The chief disaster of preaching is detachment and indifference. Never was any sermon so poor and thin but it contained more than its hearers could

practise. No sermon has failed which has sent one man away richer by a single thought, or stirred to a single brave deed.

## II.

### How to Make the Most of Your Minister.

Between a minister and his congregation there is an action and a reaction, so that the minister makes the congregation, and the congregation makes the minister. When one speaks of a minister's service to his people, one is not thinking of pew rents and offertories and statistics and crowds, nor of schools and guilds and classes and lectures. The master achievement of the minister is to form character and to make men. The chief question, therefore, to consider about a minister's work is: What kind of men has he made?

And one, at least, of the most decisive questions by which the members of a congregation can be judged is: What have they made of their minister? By that one does not mean what salary they may give him nor how agreeable they may be to him, but how far he has become a man and risen to his height in the atmosphere of his congregation. Some congregations have ruined ministers by harassing them till they lost heart and self-control, and became peevish and ill-tempered. Some congregations, again, have ruined ministers by so humoring and petting them that they could endure no contradiction, and became childish. That congregation has done its duty most effectively which has created an atmosphere so genial, and yet so bracing, that every good in its minister has been fostered and everything petty killed.

### What the Congregation Must Do.

A young minister is a charge committed to a congregation, and its first duty is patience, especially with his preaching. One extremely young, and, what is not the same thing, very immature, minister began life as assistant in a city church famous for its activity and earnestness. His work was to visit sick people and to attend to details, and, wisely, he was seldom asked to preach. When he did preach his sermon was a very boyish performance indeed—shallow, rhetorical, unpractical—and he had sense enough to be ashamed. By and by he was appointed, for accidental and personal reasons, to a church of his own in a remote country district. Before he left the big city church, one of the elders called to bid him farewell. He said he felt that it was only right to point out where the assistant had succeeded and where he had failed.

"You have been very attentive to the invalids and—er—the children, and I may say without flattery that you have been well liked, but you know that God has not given you the power of public speech. I am afraid you will never be able to preach. Still, you may have much usefulness and blessing as a pastor."

It was not a cheering prospect to wait on old ladies and attend Sunday-school treats, but the lad thanked the candid elder with a sinking heart, and went to his new work.

## What One Man Did for His Minister.

His first experiences in the new parish seemed to confirm the pessimistic prophecy. One day he forgot everything in the middle of his sermon; another day, in expounding an epistle of Saint Paul, he had got his thoughts

into such a tangled skein that he had to begin again and repeat half his exposition. On that occasion the young minister was so utterly disheartened that he formed a hasty resolution in the pulpit to retire, and went into the vestry in the lowest spirits. There an old Highland elder was awaiting him to take him by the hand and to thank him for "an eloquent discourse."

"It is wonderful," he said in his soft, kindly accent, "that you are preaching so well, and you so young, and I am wanting to say that if you ever forget a head of your discourse, you are not to be putting yourself about. You will just give out a Psalm and be taking a rest, and maybe it will be coming back to you. We all have plenty of time, and we all will be liking you very much. The people are saying what a good preacher you are going to be soon, and they are already very proud of you."

Next Sunday the minister entered the pulpit with a confident heart, and was sustained by the buoyant atmosphere of friendliness; and as a consequence he did not hesitate nor forget, nor has he required since that day to begin again. Little wonder that his heart goes back from a city to that Highland parish with affection and gratitude; had it not been for the charity of his first people he would not now be in the ministry.

## A Congregation Must Stand by its Minister.

The members of a congregation are bound to stand by their minister in the outer world. He is their own, and they ought to be jealous of his good name. If he says or does what is less than right, let them tell him face to face in all tenderness and love; but if strangers criticise him, let his people defend

and praise. If a man's own household is loyal, then he is not cast down by the hostility of the man on the street. When it turns against him he loses heart. Nothing will teach a proper man to judge himself more severely or to realize his faults more distinctly than the discovery that his critics in private are his advocates in public.

It happened once that a leading member of a congregation considered it his duty to remonstrate with his minister, to whom he was deeply attached, because the minister's preaching had grown hard and unspiritual. They were personal friends, and the conversation was conducted with perfect taste and temper; but the minister did feel a little sore afterwards, which was rather foolish, and he worried himself with the idea that his friends and his congregation were turning against him. A few days afterward a brother minister called upon him, and as they

talked of one thing and another his visitor congratulated him on the attachment of his people. "Why, last night at a dinner-table old Doctor Sardine was carping at your preaching—calling you a rationalist, and so forth—when Mr. Cochrane spoke out at once and told the old gentleman that he did not know what he was talking about. 'I go to his church,' said your man, 'and I know that I can never repay my minister all that he has done for me and mine.' It was straight talk, and produced an immense impression, and one minister envied you such a friend."

### Nothing Helps a Minister Like Confidence.

While his friend had told him his faults boldly, man to man, and he had taken private offence, like a foolish child, that friend had been guarding his reputation with generous enthusi-

asm, and at the thought thereof he was moved to repentance. The judgment of his friend received a new weight, being sanctioned by such pledges of sincerity and magnanimity. So it came to pass in the end that the minister reconsidered his position and realized that he had fallen into extremes. Nothing has a more wholesome effect on a high-spirited man than the sense that a number of people trust him and guard him, and are ready to stand or fall with him. This confidence inspires him with humility, tones down his pride, teaches him caution, and lays on him the responsibility of carrying himself well in the conflict of life.

A wise congregation will also respond to the highest which the minister gives, and will discriminate between the second-rate and first-rate product of his brain. There is such a thing as a cheap sermon, which may be very popular and showy, with a shallow cleverness.

Bright men are often tempted to preach such sermons because they are easily thrown off, and do not strain the soul. And a congregation is apt to welcome such sermons because they demand little attention.

### Congregations Must Listen with their Souls.

There is such a thing as a dear sermon, which has cost a man agony of brain and heart—a sermon charged with thought and passion. Such sermons are not lightly prepared nor can they be lightly heard. As the preacher has put his soul into his work, so the people must put their souls into the hearing. Of course, a strong man will not cease to put forth his hardest, choicest work, although no one approves, and he will not fall beneath his best in any circumstances; but the desire for cheap and popular preaching puts a

heavy strain on the resolution of an ordinary minister until he is sometimes tempted to please the foolish people in his congregation, and to lighten his own burden by giving them less than his best. And it is the saddest of all ironies in church life when a man succeeds, as far as outside appearances go, who has buried his talents, and a congregation is happy and apparently satisfied which has wasted its minister.

If a minister be inspired by high ideals and has an iron will, he will fulfil himself in spite of the most debilitating circumstances, and although his people clamor for cheap cleverness, he will insist on feeding them with the finest of the wheat. Many worthy men, however, are neither particularly strong nor spiritual, and if their people have no appetite for strong meat, they will satisfy them with the poorest of all claptrap—the claptrap of religion. It may be evangelistic verbiage or social

rant or rationalistic cant, but it is the by-product of the man's mind, and worse than worthless to the members of his church.

## The Minister Must Lead His People.

The minister should be given to understand that his congregation expects to share in the ripest knowledge he possesses, and will appreciate his most careful thinking. When he rises to his height on any occasion and preaches a great sermon it does not matter whether every person has understood every word or some of them only about one-half. He ought to be told that all the members of his church are proud of him and thank God for him, and that even if he were beyond them, this was not because of obscurity, but because of elevation, and that they are pleased to have a minister who lives at

such a level. He must not come down to them, but they must strive to rise to him. It is a miserable business for a preacher to repeat the commonplaces of his people in a showy form so that the man in the street goes home congratulating himself because he has heard his paltry ideas tricked out in a showy dress. It is the function of the prophet to lead his flock onward, even though the march be sometimes through the wilderness, and they ought to follow close behind him and tell him that they are there, and that they will not cease to follow till he has brought them into the fulness of the Land of Promise. Under those conditions a man will feel bound to read the best books and to think out every subject to its very heart; he will grudge no labor of brain, no emotion of soul, to meet the expectation of a thoughtful, broad-minded people, and if he come at last to be a leader of thought whose words fly far

and wide, then to this congregation will the credit be due who believed in him and demanded great things of him and made more of him than he, in his most ambitious moment, could have imagined.

### Ministers Need Constant Encouragement.

It is also the duty of the members of a congregation to encourage their minister, and they would take more trouble to do so if they only knew how much he needed their encouragement, and how much he would thrive upon it. They must have a strong imagination in order to understand the trials of his lot, which are different from those of every other worker, because he has to work by faith and not by sight. As he sits in his study and at midday has not written a line because his thoughts would not flow, or when he burns four hours' work

because it is worthless, the minister looks out and envies a workman who, across the street, has completed in the same time so many feet of brickwork which is as good as it could be, and will last for many a year. As he visits the sick of his flock, anxiously looking for some sign that his words of comfort and advice have produced their due effect, he wishes he were a physician, who can see the good he does and has his quick reward in lives saved from death—in bodies relieved from pain. It sometimes seems to the minister as if his words from week to week were wasted —so much water poured on the desert. From the very nature of the case he cannot discover the fruit of his ministry, and therefore others should tell him that he has not labored in vain. People are quick enough to criticise a sermon or to dwell upon the fact that the attendance has been a little scantier of late, but is there nothing else they could

mention to the pastor? Has he never thrown light on some difficult passage of Scripture nor stimulated the conscience to the sense of some new duty nor sustained the heart in some sorrow of life? Why should he be left in ignorance who waits so wistfully for news which does not come and which would mean so much?

## One Letter Which Inspired a Sermon.

Let me take you to the interior of a study where the minister is toiling with laboring oar and despairs of ever reaching land. The forenoon mail arrives and four letters are laid upon his table: one is uninteresting, one is tiresome, one is vexatious, and the disheartened man opens the fourth letter with a sigh. Another complaint from some querulous person; another detail laid on a weary man! What is this?

"My Dear Pastor: For some time I have wished to write and tell you what a help you have been to those who are very dear to me. Again and again my husband has been cheered and encouraged in his fight to do what is right in business by your brave words. He told me one Sunday night that nothing had done so much to keep him straight as your sermons. You know that Jack made us rather anxious for some time because he seemed careless and indifferent to home. Well, he has quite changed of late, and is so attentive to me and nice with his father. And on my birthday he brought me such a lovely present, for which he must have been saving during months. When I told him how grateful I was he only said: 'It was that sermon on sons and mothers did it.' And now last Sunday your sermon on care seemed to be written for me, for I have so little faith and am so anxious. So I must tell you that you have inspired the life of one household and that we bless God for you.

"Yours most gratefully,
"May Harrison."

It may not seem a long letter nor one difficult to understand, but the minister was not satisfied till he had read it six times. And although it may not seem a learned letter, it shed such a flood of light on the text that the minister's pen

flew. He locked that letter up in his desk, but found that he had forgotten a sentence, so it was more convenient to carry it in his pocket. On Sunday he judged it necessary to read that letter before going to church, and he had a last peep at it in the vestry. And the minister preached that morning with such power and hope that even the grumblers were satisfied, and the congregation went home on wings.

## III.

### The Candy-Pull System in the Church.

As I write, the appeal of a Young Men's Christian Association to its members lies on the table before me, and I copy it verbatim:

"Do Not Forget

The next Social
The next Candy-pull
The next Entertainment
The next Song Service
The next Gospel Meeting
The next Meeting of the Debating Club
The next Chicken-pie Dinner
The next date when you ought to make the secretary happy with your cash."

This remarkable list of operations, combining evangelistic zeal, creature

comforts, and business shrewdness, requires no commentary: the items give us a convincing illustration of an up-to-date religious institution—a veritable hustler of a Y. M. C. A.

Perhaps one department of the work requires a word of explanation; there may be some persons who have given considerable attention to Christian agencies, and yet whose researches may not have come across a "candy-pull." This agency, if that be the correct word, is a party of young men and women who meet for the purpose of pulling candy, and, in the case of the co-operation of sexes, is said to be a very engaging employment. It may be that candy-pulling on the part of a Y. M. C. A. is confined to one sex, and is therefore shorn of half its attraction, but one clings to the idea that in these days of "pleasant" religious evenings the young men would not be left to their own company.

## Conducting a Church on Modern Lines.

The Christian church and a Y. M. C. A. are, of course, very different institutions, and the latter is free from any traditions of austere dignity; but one is not surprised to find that the church has also been touched with the social spirit and is also doing her best to make religion entertaining. One enters what is called a place of worship and imagines that he is in a drawing-room. The floor has a thick carpet, there are rows of theatre chairs, a huge organ fills the eye, a large bouquet of flowers marks the minister's place; people come in with a jaunty air and salute one another cheerily; hardly one bends his head in prayer; there is a hum of gossip through the building.

A man disentangles himself from a conversation and bustles up to the platform without clerical robes of any

kind, as likely as not in layman's dress. A quartette advances, and, facing the audience, sings an anthem to the congregation, which does not rise, and later they sing another anthem, also to the congregation. There is one prayer, and one reading from Holy Scripture, and a sermon which is brief and bright. Among other intimations the minister urges attendance at the Easter supper, when, as is mentioned in a paper in the pews, there will be oysters and meat—turkey, I think—and ice-cream. This meal is to be served in the "church parlor."

### As Soon as the Benediction is Said.

No sooner has the benediction been pronounced, which has some original feature introduced, than the congregation hurries to the door; but although no one can explain how it is managed, the minister is already there shaking

hands, introducing people, "getting off good things," and generally making things "hum." One person congratulates him on his "talk"—new name for a sermon—and another says it was "fine."

Efforts have been made in England also to make church life really popular, and, in one town known to the writer, with some success of its own kind. One church secured a new set of communion plate by the popular device of a dance; various congregations gave private theatricals, and one enterprising body had stage property of its own. Bible classes celebrated the conclusion of their session by a supper; on Good Fridays there were excursions into the country, accompanied by a military band, and a considerable portion of the congregational income was derived from social treats of various kinds. This particular town is only an illustration of the genial spirit spreading through-

out the church in England. One minister uses a magic lantern to give force to his sermon; another has added a tavern to his church equipment; a third takes up the latest murder or scandal; a fourth has a service of song; a fifth depends on a gypsy or an ex-pugilist.

If this goes on, the church will soon embrace a theatre and other attractions which will draw young people and prevent old people from wearying in the worship of God.

## Is the New Departure an Improvement?

Perhaps it may be the perversity of human nature which is apt to cavil at new things and hanker after the good old times—which were not always good, by any means—but one is not much enamored with the new departure nor at all convinced that what may be called for brief the "Candy-pull" system is any

improvement on the past. After a slight experience of smart preachers and church parlors and ice-cream suppers and picnics, one remembers with new respect and keen appreciation the minister of former days, with his seemly dress, his dignified manner, his sense of responsibility, who came from the secret place of Divine fellowship, and spoke as one carrying the message of the Eternal. He may not have been so fussy in the aisles as his successor nor so clever at games nor able to make so fetching a speech on "Love, Courtship, and Marriage."

## Was the Old-Time Clergyman too Formal?

The members of his congregation may not have called him a "bright man" nor said he was "great fun" nor asked him so often to tea-parties, and it may be granted that he erred on the

side of formality; but, on the other hand, they spoke of him as a "man of God" and a "good man," and in the straits of life and in anxiety of conscience they sent for him. They may not have liked him so well as the modern man, but they respected and trusted him, which is far more important.

One is also struck by the change in the whole environment of worship, and there may be a difference of opinion whether it has been for the better or the worse. The church of our fathers was not well lighted nor scientifically ventilated nor elaborately cushioned, and all there could be seen of carpet was on the pulpit stairs. The church of to-day is amazingly decorated, and bright with innumerable electric lights.

### Congregations Meet to Listen to the Choir.

The service of the past was musically imperfect and was generally too long.

To-day the tenor in the choir is dismissed if his voice shows signs of wear, and the people sit in judgment on how the anthem has been "attacked" or "rendered"—perhaps it was "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"—and there is a notice in the vestry (or minister's parlor) that the Scripture lesson must not exceed fifteen verses—ten is preferred—and the prayers must not encroach on the music, and the sermon, whatever be its subject, even though it be the Judgment Day, must be "interesting." In the former time a congregation used to speak of a sermon as "edifying" or "searching" or "comforting." Now it declares that the preacher was in "great form," or it complains that he was "off color."

There are, no doubt, many points in which the congregation of the present has advanced on the congregation of the past, but it has not been all gain, for the chief note in the worship of the

former generation was reverence—people met in the presence of the Eternal, before whom every man is less than nothing. And the chief note of their children, who meet to listen to a choir and a clever platform speaker, is self-complacency.

### Fear of God Seems to Have Departed.

It ought to be granted that one reason for this change in the spirit of congregational life is a reaction from individualism and a new conception of the fellowship of the Christian church. A religious person no longer thinks of himself as a solitary unit, isolated from every other human being in the world, and whose chief business in life is to save his own soul. He has realized that his life is bound up with that of his neighbors, and that he is a member of a society which extends over all the

world; that he must not deny his humanity, and that in saving others he is also saving himself. The world is no longer a wilderness through which he marches a pilgrim and stranger, but his birthplace, to which he owes a duty, and religion is not so much an austere devotion to God as it is a useful, charitable life.

The centre of thought has, in fact, shifted from eternity to time, from the worship of God to the service of men. The one idea was enshrined in a Puritan meeting, where each man waited in wistful expectation for a sign of favor from the Almighty, or in the cathedral where the multitude bowed in silent adoration at the lifting of the Host. The other idea is visible in the building, more concert-room than church, where a number of good people meet in high spirits and in kindly fellowship to move one another to good works, and to sing hymns. The ancient fear of God seems

to have departed entirely, and with it the sense of the unseen, which once constituted the spirit of worship.

### The Up-to-Date Church Needs an Annex.

Religion, it is urged with considerable force, must provide not only for the soul, but also for the mind and body, so that a Christian will not need to go outside the church for culture or amusement. If he want relaxation, entertainments must be provided for him at his church, so that he need not go into worldly society; and whatever be his intellectual taste, it must be met in his ecclesiastical home. His literary and debating society and drawing-room and concert must be all under one roof, so that the young Christian may be sheltered from temptation.

As this social tendency of the congregation is becoming more marked every

year, and new inventions are being added, it is vain to urge a return to the simplicity of the past, when a congregation was a body of people who met to worship God and study His will; but it may be worth while to point to certain drawbacks in the new development. For one thing, if congregations are to become "universal providers," another kind of minister will be needed.

### How the Modern Minister Prepares Himself.

For this kind of institution a teacher to expound the Bible or a pastor to train the character of his people is hardly needed, and certainly he would not be appreciated. The chief requisite demanded is a sharp man, with the gifts of an impresario, a commercial traveller, and an auctioneer combined, with the slightest flavor of a peripatetic evangelist. Instead of a study lined

with books of grave divinity and classical literature, let him have an office with pigeon-holes for his programmes and endless correspondence; cupboards for huge books, with cuttings from newspapers and reports of other organizations; a telephone ever tingling, and a set of handbooks: "How to Make a Sermon in Thirty Minutes," or "One Thousand Racy Anecdotes from the Mission Field."

Here sits an alert, vivacious, inventive manager, with his female stenographer at a side table, turning over one huge book to discover who is next in order of time for visitation, and another for details of families, or hastily examining filed speeches of public men on some subject to be taken on Sunday. From morning to night he toils, telephoning, telegraphing, dictating, compiling, hurrying around, conducting "socials" or "bright evenings," giving "talks," holding receptions, an un-

wearied, adroit, persevering man. No one can help admiring his versatility and honesty of intention; but if he is to be the type of the minister of the future, then he will supersede and exclude a better man.

## Should the Pulpit be Given to Managers?

There are men who possess every becoming gift of learning and insight and devotion and charity who are absolutely incapable of "running" a church on modern lines. They could guide a soul in spiritual peril, but they have no talent for amusing young people; they can declare the Everlasting Gospel of the Divine Sacrifice, but they have no turn for machinery; they can expound the principles of righteousness, but they refuse to meddle with a recent strike of motormen.

As regards the gain of the new depart-

ure, is it certain that the socializing of the Church will make her creed and life attractive? If it come to be a competition between the amusements of the Church (or her feasts) and the amusements of the world (and its feasts), is there any sane person who thinks that the Church can win? Like Cæsar, the world offers her magnificent shows; the Church, like Christ, presents the victorious Cross.

## The Church Must Not Leave Her High Place.

Why should the Church leave her high place and come down into the arena, where she will be put to shame? Do men come to church for petty pleasures fit only for children or for the satisfaction of their souls and the confirmation of their faith? Would Christianity have begun to exist if the Apostles had been "pleasing preachers"

and "bright men" and had given themselves to "socials" and "sales" and "talks"? The Church triumphed by her faith, her holiness, her courage, and by these high virtues she must stand in this age also. She is the witness to immortality, the spiritual home of souls, the servant of the poor, the protector of the friendless; and if she sinks into a place of second-rate entertainment, then it were better that her history should close, for without her spiritual visions and austere ideals the Church is not worth preserving.

## IV.

### The Mutineer in the Church.

It takes all kinds of people to make a world, and it takes almost as many kinds to make a congregation, but it is not necessary for congregational completeness to possess a mutineer. By a mutineer one means a person we can easily identify, and at whose hands most congregations have sometimes suffered. He is not to be confounded with a Christian of old-fashioned opinions, who is occasionally disturbed by a sermon on "The Fatherhood of God," and will come to the minister's study to explain that he has always believed God to be a judge. This man

is perfectly honest, and ought to be treated with all consideration, because he is simply loyal to his hereditary faith, and all the time would like to receive the new gospel. Let him have a warm corner in the room, and a comfortable seat, and free opportunity to run through as many texts as he wishes, and a candid hearing unto the hour of midnight. He is open to conviction, and even if he leave unconvinced, he will not go to set fire to the congregation. Not he; but he will explain everywhere that the minister is a faithful Bible student and a patient pastor, and that it is a privilege and a responsibility to sit in his church.

### Do Not Confound Him with the Restless Person.

Nor must the word be applied to one of those restless people who are ever detecting some fault in affairs and who

weary every person with random suggestions. One week he writes that a woman was turned away from the church prayer-meeting because the hall was full—the minister is always amused with this mythical person and wishes he could see her in the flesh—and he suggests that the weekday service should be held in the church. He knows a hundred people who would be willing to come—and this also pleases the minister very much, because the good man hardly ever attends himself. Next week some mysterious person informs this man that he has caught cold through the draught from one of the windows, and our friend writes sixteen pages to advocate window curtains, which would make St. Peter's itself hideous and worship impossible for all self-respecting people. A month later this same man is convinced that the whole congregation is a rope of sand, and ought to be bound up by a

general visitation on the part of the office bearers, for which he is good enough to sketch a plan; and every other week he will make a new suggestion in a voluminous letter, till his brethren are apt to say strong words about his meddlesomeness.

### Treat the Restless Person with Respect.

His brethren ought rather to possess their souls in patience and treat the worthy man kindly, for there is not a grain of mischief in him, nor is there a better-hearted man in the whole congregation. He will be quite pleased if he gets a civil answer, and I would suggest this form for such occasions:

"Dear Mr. Jump: I have received your interesting letter and note your suggestion about the curtains. The matter is one which will require careful consideration, and I hasten to assure you that it is encouraging to the minister and workers of the church to find

that the welfare of our church in every respect lies so near your heart. With very warm regard, believe me,

"Yours faithfully,
"JOB HOLDFAST, Pastor."

Mr. Jump will be quite satisfied with this letter, and in twenty-four hours will have forgotten that he ever proposed curtains. It will be worth while for a congregation to engage, say, one Jump, just to note defects and to keep things moving. Two Jumps might be too much for the congregation, and they had better dispose of the second.

## THE OVER-SENSITIVE CHURCH MEMBER.

There is another person who ought not to be considered a mutineer, although he is very wrong-headed and may become a real nuisance. He is the man who is apt to be offended and to be "hurt," as he calls it, because some one passed him at the church door

without speaking, or "said things" about him—he knows not what—behind his back, or objected to some plan which he proposed, or refused to do something he asked. Having worried his wife about the matter, and talked himself into a fever of wounded vanity, he gives everybody to understand that he has a grievance, and assumes the air of a martyr. As a formal protest he may even absent himself from church for two Sundays, and will be still further hurt if no one calls to inquire the reason. Of course, he is very provoking, but there is no malice in the man, and he ought to be gently treated. It is his misfortune rather than his fault that he has no scarf-skin and no protection against the inevitable friction of life. A gentle touch and a liberal use of spiritual ointment will cure his wounds —or, rather, scratches.

### How to Detect the Genuine Mutineer.

The mutineer is of another breed and is an able-bodied miscreant, who will strike a hard blow whenever he can get an opportunity, and at any person whom he can reach. His sole desire is to do mischief, and the more pain he gives the better is he pleased. He will write insulting letters to the minister, charging him with every sin from heresy to lying. He will get up a public controversy about the affairs of the congregation in any newspaper which is foolish enough to insert his letters. He will attack the most reasonable proposals of the office bearers, and impute to them the worst motives. He will move through the congregation as an incendiary, and set fire to every inflammable person. When he is in his glory he will threaten proceedings in the church courts or in the civil courts; and al-

though he will never carry them out, being a coward as well as a bully, he will take the preliminary steps, which cause talk and alarm. It will also be part of his rôle to pose as a straightforward and honest man of unflinching rectitude and spiritual aims. What he does will always be under constraint of conscience, and he will summon himself and his opponents with much rhetorical effect before the bar of eternal justice. He is so big and blatant, and good people are so charitable and easily cowed, that they often take this man at his own value and come to terms with him.

### He Should Receive Little Consideration.

As a matter of fact, he is an utter humbug from every point of view, and ought to receive no mercy. Neither his opinions nor his feelings nor his complaints nor his threatenings should

receive one moment's consideration. His first challenge should be accepted as a declaration of war, and the war had better be without quarter; and it is astonishing how soon this brigand can be brought to his senses and to abject submission.

Should he be established in a congregation and have shown his hand, the wisest plan is to give him notice to quit. It is not usual to ask any member to leave a church, and very unusual if he happen to be a man of substance and position, as this fellow often is; but congregations are much too anxious to keep every person, and much too slow to recognize that some men's absence is more profitable than their presence. Their presence simply means turmoil and heartburnings, their absence peace and prosperity; their presence soon drives many quiet folk away; their absence would remove a stumbling-block.

### His Influence is Always Detrimental.

Should he apply for admission to a church where his character is known, then he should be plainly refused. Why should any minister, if it depend on him, receive a man who has half-broken another minister's heart? Why should a congregation give house room to a man who has reduced the affairs of another to ruin? The chances are he has left like an army which has eaten up one country and now must go to devastate another. If there be any power in a congregation that can do it, let the door be slammed in this man's face, and as he wanders about churchless perhaps he may learn wisdom.

Should any one say that we are treating the mutineer unkindly and un-Christianly, then he is carried away by an excess of charity and is not facing the facts. To deal kindly with a muti-

neer is to be cruel to the minister and the congregation. Although he be only a single individual, there is no end to the mischief which this man can do. For one thing, he will gravely affect the preacher, and that in ways which the congregation can hardly imagine. No preacher who is worth the name writes his sermons without reference to his congregation, as if he were living in another planet and were dealing only with the ideas of the study. As he sits at the table he is really in the pulpit and the congregation in the pews; he speaks to them, and they respond; he sees one head lifted and another cast down, one rebuked and another comforted, till the books of the study disappear and the room is full of human feeling. It is in this atmosphere that the preacher will do his best work and most perfectly fulfil his mission. Suppose, therefore, that at the end of a pew—and that is where he is certain

to be, in some prominent place—this rebel is sitting, pugnacious, insolent, and defiant: is he not apt to be an influence in the sermon?

### Effect of His Presence in the Church.

No doubt there are men with such mental self-control and superb indifference to circumstances that they will ignore his existence. These are men of the great order, and one cannot expect many in the ministry or in any profession. For them there are no rules, and for them no hindrances; they are invulnerable and irresistible. Upon ordinary men the mutineer has an irritating and deflecting power, so that a preacher, consciously or unconsciously, is ever taking him into account, and the sermon's course is to a certain extent regulated by this man's existence. If the minister be a gentle and fearful

man, he is apt to be over-considerate, and will omit things which he ought to have said lest he should give offence. Instead of the sermon's pursuing its straight way and reaching its destination with as little loss of distance as possible, it will be timid and subdued in style. The preacher will be continually qualifying in order not to be caught by this critic, or he will be continually deferring lest he should give offence to this mighty man. People will have a vague sense of weakness, but they may never guess the cause.

### The Preacher's Way of Dealing with Him.

Suppose, however, the preacher be a strong and determined man, but not one of the larger minds and the broader vision, then the mutineer will affect him after another fashion. From the beginning of the sermon the preacher

will set himself to deal with this man and to bring him to his senses. His character and his actions will be described and denounced and satirized and threatened. He will be pelted with the judgments of Holy Scripture; its commandments will be laid to his back like a lash; the invitations of the Gospel will be denied him, and the historical rascals of the Bible will be suggested as his photograph. Unto any one who understands the allusion it will seem that this man is being hardly dealt with; but to any one who thinks a little deeper it will be seen that the preacher is the victim. The preacher has grown sour and vindictive; the sermon has lost its grace and tenderness; and I know not which is the greater calamity: a preacher without magnanimity or a sermon without nobility.

He is a Disturbing Factor Everywhere.

Remove this man from his place in that church and the minister will give himself without disturbance to deal both with saints and sinners in the love of God.

The mutineer will also distinguish himself in arresting the activity of the church both in work and giving. Should he have a place, say, in the Sunday-school, he will quarrel with the superintendent and every one of the teachers in turn till he has the school to himself, and then he will lament the decay of Christian sacrifice in the spirit. If he be appointed treasurer of a fund under the idea that this will give him something to do, he will be such an offence that no one will subscribe; and if he be not treasurer, he will declare everywhere that the fund does more mischief than good, and that those

desiring the welfare of the church should not subscribe.

And besides all these mischievous achievements, he will poison the life of the church so that, instead of being gracious and harmonious, it will become bitter and quarrelsome. If there be a dispute in the church, this man will foment it; and if it be possible to set two people by the ears, he will do it. When there is an honest difference of opinion he will see that it be turned into a feud; and if a new proposal be put before the people, he will get up an acrimonious debate.

### Effectual Methods of Treating Him.

Perhaps the most effectual system with such a man is not scolding and storming, but a policy of isolation. As nature makes a cyst and encloses any strange material so that it be kept sepa-

rate from the body, let this man be imprisoned in a place by himself. If he should offer any remark upon church affairs, let the other person answer on the state of the weather; and if he criticise a sermon, say that he is sorry to hear of his dyspepsia. If he rise to speak at a church meeting, let the silence be such as may be felt, and after he has spoken let the chairman call for the next business as if he had never existed. If he has ever to be spoken to, the best plan is to treat him as an absurdity, and play around him with ridicule, for this will give much innocent amusement to other people, and it is the particular attack which he cannot stand. Between loneliness and laughter he will depart to another church, and then let the happy congregation sing the Te Deum.

## V.

### Should the Old Clergyman be Shot?

One day, and perhaps quite suddenly, a congregation awakens to the fact that a certain calamity has befallen the minister which will cripple his power more and more every day and may also ruin the life of the congregation. It has nothing to do with his character, for he is really a much holier man, and perhaps also a much wiser one, than he was twenty years before, and certainly he commits fewer mistakes in word and deed than in the days of his youth. Nor does it concern his pastoral work—for he is more than ever the counsellor and friend of the

people, speaking to them from a richer experience of life and a larger charity. It is not right to say that it touches his preaching, for that is likely to be quite as solid and as useful as it ever was. Indeed, he is saying the very things he used to say with much acceptance, and in the way he used to say them—long ago.

Nothing is wrong with him, only that he does not walk so quickly as he used to, that he speaks a little more slowly, and that last week he had to get older spectacles, that he does not always hear what is said to him, that his hair is passing from gray to white, that he is fatigued when going up a hill. It has happened to him just as it happens to other men: the minister is getting old.

### Old Ministers Impervious to New Ideas.

As soon as they realize the fact—and it may be years before they do notice

it—the heads of a congregation begin to grow uneasy. Age has its advantages in the office of the ministry, but it has also very evident disadvantages, and when the balance is struck perhaps a congregation is right in the idea that it is losing, and not gaining, under the ministry of an old man. For one thing —and it is a very serious one—a minister after a certain age is almost impervious to new ideas. Of course, the exact age will vary with different men, and it is dangerous even to hint at it, since the reader would always be able to mention exceptions. There are men to whose minds no new idea can find access at the age of thirty—men of hopeless dulness, who will be an incubus on a congregation all their days; and there are men whose minds will be hospitable to the latest ideas at the age of fourscore—men of unique mental freshness and vivacity.

With the average man there comes

a time when his mind crystallizes and his beliefs become absolutely fixed. He may not resent the discoveries of younger men; he certainly will not assimilate them. He may not oppose new methods of action; he certainly will not adopt them. His preaching may be absolutely as good as it was before, because it will be the same, without any addition of new thought; but it may be bad, comparatively speaking, because it should have much new material and should also be in much closer touch with the age.

### He Comes to be a Brake Upon the Coach.

With middle age there is apt to set in a suspicion of the rising generation and a keen resentment of its standpoint, so that the middle-aged man falls into a critical and pessimistic mood. He comes to be a brake upon the coach,

and while the brake is a useful thing in its own place, it is a poor substitute for horses.

If his work be in a city church, it is a grave question whether any minister can now discharge it with efficiency who is above sixty years of age. The multitude of details in a city parish, the excitement of the life, the severe demand upon the mind, and the heavy burden of responsibility call for a man in the prime of life, with an alert intellect and an unfailing body. It is likely as time goes on that men after, say, twenty years in a city will have to retire and take some quieter sphere in the country. They will be put, as it were, upon the semi-retired list.

Besides, as one cannot fail to notice, the average man of middle age in bidding good-by finally to youth himself also largely isolates himself from young people. They may be respectful to him, and he may be

interested in them, but there is now no common language and no common sympathy. They are apt to think him an "old fogy" (and as a middle-aged man myself I am inclined to think we do grow old-fogyish), and he is apt to think them frivolous. There are few men who can bridge the gulf between two generations and be equally acceptable both to the young and to the old, and the difficulty will increase rather than diminish. And all this is the penalty of growing old or even passing middle age.

### One Eminent Clergyman Suggested Shooting.

What, then, is to be done with this unfortunate man? And the difficulty has been felt so acutely that a distinguished divine of our day—who is now dead—proposed that a minister who was past his prime should be taken out

(I presume to some sheltered spot) and shot. His idea was that clerical incumbents should be treated after the same fashion as worn-out horses. It has always been dangerous to use irony in England since the days of Swift, for although the English people may have every other quality under the sun, they certainly have not a quick sense of humor, and I am not certain that some people did not think that this eminent person was serious in his savage suggestion. Certainly he expressed the mind of some ungrateful and miserable congregations, who would be immensely relieved to get rid of an old servant in the quickest and cheapest fashion. Perhaps, also, it would be the kindest thing to the minister when he discovers himself to be an incumbrance on those whom he loves and who once loved him, to give him by some means the *coup de grâce;* but there are objections on the part of an interfering law to this sum-

mary method of disposal, and one must abandon the idea of an ecclesiastical knacker's yard.

### If He Had Any Sense of Propriety He Would Die.

You have, then, four courses of action with this unfortunate man, who, if he had had any sense of propriety would have died decently of a short and pathetic illness at the age of fifty-five, and the first is that the congregation do nothing and he be allowed to live out his days in the pulpit. Very likely he used to say about the age of thirty that he would never continue in the ministry after his leaf had become yellow; that he wondered how old men could not see that their day was past, and that it would be better for them to be pottering about in a country garden. When he said these brave things he was standing on the other side of the hedge, and now,

when he is double the age, he has quite another view of the situation. He declares that he never felt younger in his life and never more fit to preach. At times he grows heroic, and declares that as long as he can crawl he will mount the pulpit stairs and that he will die in harness.

Foolish people (mostly old ladies) will tell him that he never preached so ably as he did last Sunday, and he will incline his ear to this little circle of admirers and will refuse the advice of sensible men who have his welfare at heart and who suggest to him that he should of his own accord resign the office he has so honorably filled. So it will come to pass that church and city will see one of the saddest tragedies: a man scattering the congregation he once gathered and flinging away the reputation he once won.

To Suggest a Colleague Does Not Please.

Or the congregation may pluck up courage and insist upon the worthy old gentleman having a colleague. "We do not want to lose your services," it is explained to the minister by some shrewd diplomat who knows that the minister, not to speak of the minister's wife, is watching him all the time with suspicious eyes. "We only wish to relieve you of the heavy end of your work. Would it not be a good thing that we should secure a vigorous young man who would take care of the classes and all the details of the church work, and preach once a day to save you fatigue and allow you to go for a lengthened holiday from time to time? You have been very good in not asking relief from preaching, but the congregation feels that it is only a bare duty to give you permanent assistance. Be-

sides," and now the ambassador feels that the minister's wife is regarding him with contempt as a detected cheat and an utter humbug, "it would be a good thing for a young man to have the benefit of your preaching and advice."

Very likely the old gentleman, after a conference with his wife and her lady friends, will refuse to have anything to do with a colleague, and will explain that he will propose such a measure himself as soon as he really finds it necessary, and meantime that nothing could be worse for a young man than to be going about doing nothing. He will perhaps add, and add it with deep regret, that he is assured by influential members of the congregation that the intrusion of a colleague would undo all the work that has been done and rend the church in twain.

### Trouble When He Consents to Have a Colleague.

Should, however, the minister agree to a colleague, the result in nine cases out of ten will be disastrous. Either the old man will so dominate his younger brother that the latter will have no room for his individuality and will never rise to his height, or the young man will set himself against the old, and with the younger people at his back will drive the senior minister from the church. It is indeed an unreasonable and unnatural position that two men should have equal authority, and all the more so when they are both so dependent on popular opinion. Was it ever heard of that there should be two captains in one ship, two commanders-in-chief in one army, or even two engineers working one engine? And yet sane people will propose, not that a minister should have assistants or

curates, but that he should have a colleague to share with him equal authority and equal responsibility.

### Forcing the Old Minister to Retire.

Of course, a congregation may make it so uncomfortable for the man who has served it during the best years of his life that he will have no alternative, and will be glad to leave, even if he go to obscurity and poverty. And when a congregation takes this way of cutting the knot one almost despairs of Christianity. The meanest merchant who ever wrangled over a cent would not treat an old clerk as a body of Christian people will sometimes treat a poor and worn-out minister. They have used up his youth and his manhood and his enthusiasm and his energy; they have had the bloom of his mind and the harvest of his soul. For them he lived

and thought; for them in the days of his strength he exhausted himself every Sunday, and has permanently worn out his reserves of life. All that they could get out of him they have got, and now, after watching for a year or two, they have come to the conclusion that his best days are done, and they make him a trumpery presentation and bid him go. Then they go, cap in hand, to some popular young minister and entreat his favor, declaring that their hearts have gone out to him, and they believe it to be God's will that he should be their minister. And he, in his turn, comes, and soon is to be heard declaring that there never was such a loyal people. Let him wait a little while.

## Why Not Organize a Retirement Scheme?

Would it not be better that each denomination should organize a retire-

ment scheme upon a large scale with two conditions? The first would be that every minister should be removed from active work at the age of, say, sixty-five, and afterward he might give assistance to his brethren or live in quietness, as he pleases. The second condition would be that he receive a retiring allowance of not less than half his salary up to, say, $4000. Should any one say that such a law is arbitrary, then the answer is that surely any minister would prefer to retire by law rather than by force, and that he would be in good company, for he would share the lot of every naval and military officer and every civil servant and every officer of any great corporation throughout the civilized world.

And the Church must not fall behind the State. Upon the personnel of her ministry must she depend for her visible success, and her aim ought to be that each congregation have a minister in

full strength of mind and body, and that each man, after he has exhausted himself in the service of the Church, should be kept in comfort during the remaining years of his life.

### Aged Ministers in Active Duty are a Hindrance.

Short of immorality and unbelief, one cannot imagine a greater hindrance to the energy of the Church than a large proportion of aged and infirm ministers in active duty. For this will mean obsolete theology, the neglect of the young, isolation from the spirit of the day, and endless wrangling. Nothing would more certainly reinforce the energy of the Church than the compulsory retirement upon satisfactory terms of every minister above the age of sixty-five. For this would mean not only a reserve of good men upon whom the Church could depend in emergen-

cies, but a perpetual tide of fresh thought.

At present, congregations have a grievance against old ministers who think they are young, and old ministers have a grievance against congregations who do not respect age, and between the two arise many scandals and breaches of the peace. When the Church is as well managed as a first-rate business concern, then this standing feud will be healed, and no one will be so much respected and loved in the Christian Church as the faithful minister who has served her in the fulness of his strength, and now in the days of his well-earned rest enriches her with his counsel.

## VI.

### The Minister and the Organ.

Songs of praise are a part of public worship with every body of Christians —except the Society of Friends, whom I sometimes regard with envy—and I wish it to be understood at once that I am not prepared to suggest their abolition. The saints of the Old Testament had a musical service which was enough to fill the heart of a ritualist with despair, and one can only faintly imagine the kind of life which the priest lived who was responsible for the Temple orchestra and had to deal with the players on instruments. The New Testament saints began without an orchestra, and really seemed to have managed

their praise for some time on common-sense principles, doing the best they could with joyful lips and singing bravely in black prisons. But, like many other good people, they did not know when they were well off, and by and by they invented the melancholy chants which have been a drawback to Christians of all generations.

One sometimes wonders how the Friends are able to look so peaceful and why their worship is so delightful, and I am tempted to think it is because they have no music in their service. Had we none, a frequent cause of trouble would be removed from many a congregation, and the minister would hardly know what to do with his time. Yet I wish it to be distinctly understood at the same time that I regard music as a necessary part of divine worship, that organists are the strength of the Christian Church, and that every person who does not appreciate to the full his choir-

master and his choir is an ignorant and ill-natured Philistine.

### Why Consideration is Shown the Organist.

If there ever is any trouble in the congregation about the music, and if the minister ever worries himself, let it be admitted at once that the congregation and the minister are alone to blame. But there are difficulties, and they may be mentioned in a spirit of becoming humility. For one thing, the organist is an artist, and every artist has a nature of special refinement which cannot bear the rough-and-tumble ordinary methods of life. With a man of common clay you deal in a practical, straightforward, and even brutal fashion, arguing with him, complaining to him, and putting him right when he is wrong. But no man must handle precious porcelain in such fashion, or

the artist will be instantly wounded and will resign and carry his pathetic story to every quarter, for he is lifted above criticism and public opinion. It is impossible to teach him anything; it is an insult to suppose that anything could be better; it is best to accept what he gives, and to recognize that it is his sphere to do as he pleases and the sphere of every other person to declare that what he does is, on every occasion, too lovely for human words, and that its effect is almost too much for exhausted human nature. This is the tribute which the congregation ought to pay to the most spiritual of artists, the organist.

### Music is What the Congregation Wants.

One really becomes impatient with the minister, who ought to know better and yet forgets his own place, owing to

a want of artistic appreciation and to an overweening sense of his own office. He encroaches on the organist and is justly punished. The minister ought to remember—and the congregation may assist him in remembering—that his work is subordinate to that of the artist, and that the rest of the service is simply intended to be a support and environment for the music. What the congregation wants to hear is, not his sermon, although I have never known an organist object to the sermon, provided the preacher did not occupy too much time. Indeed, many organists, I have reason to believe, welcome the sermon as a rest for their overstrung nerves. What the congregation really desires to hear is the anthem, and the success of the day depends upon its performance. When a minister has laid this fact to heart, and taken care that the people who have been raised into a Heaven which cannot be de-

scribed by the singing are not unduly harassed by his stupid words, he has at least escaped one rock of offence.

It is also most provoking that a minister will interfere with a selection of hymns, and still harping on his sermon, will select hymns which correspond with its theme. Very likely the hymns may suit the text perfectly and may be very popular with the people, but it is only the organist who knows whether the tunes in the hymn-book be high or low class music. The tunes may be so popular that every person is thirsting to sing them with all his heart and at the pitch of his voice, but an organist will be simply aghast at the thought of a thousand people going at large, as it were, in his province. It is a privilege, and a doubtful one at the best, that they should be allowed to sing at all, but if it be granted, they must mingle trembling with their joy.

### Organists are Doing Away with Popular Tunes.

One of the chief efforts of a really cultured organist—there are exceptions—is to extirpate popular tunes and to replace them with arrangements which will teach the congregation to keep silence. A case came to my notice at one time—and when I hear of such things I do not know how my brethren have been made—where a minister got into a white heat with an organist because that eminent person had invented a tune of his own for "Rock of Ages," which was a dream of beauty and reduced the congregation to distant admiration. Nothing is more irritating to the musical temperament than to hear the people, who are always inspired with an insane desire to make a joyful noise, get hold of a really fine tune and make it afterward hateful to delicate ears. Nothing is more neces-

sary than to guard the congregational praise from these follies and at once to remove from use even the noblest tune if the people have finally taken possession of it.

Only ceaseless vigilance on the part of the organist can secure the music from the incursion of the congregation, for they are so determined and full of mad ambition that they will even set themselves to master strange tunes, and in the course of a month will drown the choir with music which was intended to be beyond their reach; and the wrong-headedness with which a minister will support the congregation in this raid upon another man's kingdom deserves all the trouble which falls upon his head.

### People Readily Subscribe to an Organ Fund.

There were days—and some of us who are no longer young can remember

them—when no instrument was used in public worship, and when every aid of this description, except a tuning-fork, was judged to be a return to the elements of the Old Testament. But those were days of darkness. To-day we are living in a brighter age. A congregation may nowadays give so little to its minister that his wife hardly knows how to get respectable clothing for the family, and may not contribute anything worth mentioning to foreign missions and hospitals; but there is no self-respecting congregation which will not now insist on possessing an organ. People who will harden their hearts against the most useful charity will subscribe to an organ fund, and what cannot be secured by subscription will be obtained by a bazaar with gambling. When the organ is opened by a distinguished musician, who is brought from a distance, the congregation will regard him with awe as an almost supernatural

being, and will count the event of more importance than a revival of religion. They will be utterly overcome by the extent and variety of sound which he will bring from the instrument, and when he uses the *Vox Humana* mothers of families can only look at one another and shake their heads as if they were hearing sounds from the other world. When he subtly suggests thunder by turning on the full force of the organ, the heads of the congregation will congratulate themselves by signal, because every one can now see that they have received full value for their money.

### Eccentricities and Demands of a New Organ.

After the recital is over the great man will improvise for his own amusement, and when it is possible for ordinary beings to speak to him, a little group of deferential office bearers will

ask him what he thinks of the organ. He may give a patronizing and guarded approval, but he will be careful to point out the number of stops which ought to be added and the number of improvements in action which are absolutely necessary. He will, in fact, suggest that they have only got the mere foundation of an organ, and that the completion will take many a year and be an endless opportunity for spending. Perhaps he may be good enough to say that some $1500, laid out in one or two improvements he rapidly sketches, will make the instrument respectable for an ordinary organist; but he may leave them under the impression that in order to make it suitable for a master like himself the congregation would require to concentrate its financial resources upon the organ for the next ten years.

If the congregation has been at all lifted by the possession of its new organ, nothing will so chasten vanity

and self-conceit as the visit of a musician who has taken a degree and has several letters after his name; and if any person depreciates his advice as that of a hypercritical player, and supposes there will be no further trouble about that organ, his innocence is delightful, and shows that he has never had anything to do with musical instruments in places of public worship.

Whatever trials the congregation may have had before with draughts in the building or questions of heating or difficulties in finance or disturbances with mutineers, all these things will be less than nothing compared with the eccentricities and demands of its new organ. If it be blown by hand, then it will be found so large that two blowers are required, and so it will be proposed to have a hydraulic engine. This engine will not go two Sundays out of four because the pressure of water has failed, and then some members of the congrega-

tion will have to work the bellows—if these have been wisely left for convenience—and before they have finished their work deacons of a stout habit of body and unaccustomed to manual labor will have quite a new feeling about that organ and will confine their compliments to the Hebrew language.

### When Real Tribulation Begins.

By and by it will be suggested that the organ should be played by electricity; and the congregation, but especially the minister and the authorities in charge of the music, will now begin to know what real tribulation means. The readjustment, it is said, will take six weeks, and be of a comparatively slight character; it will really take about a year, with some months thrown in, and during that time the congregation will have an opportunity of inspecting the different parts of its organ in the

church hall and classrooms and passages and outhouses, where it will be lying in mysterious fragments.

During the interim the members of the congregation will have forgotten that it is impossible for educated people to praise God without instrumental music, and in sheer absence of mind they will be singing more heartily than they have done for the last ten years. As there is no organ, the fancy tunes will have to be given up, and the people will be allowed to worship God with all their might. Ignorant strangers coming into the church, and not remembering that there is no organ, will say they never heard better singing in their lives, and the choir will be insulted with compliments about the way in which they are leading the congregation, while there is really no high-class choir, one or two excepted, which does not consider it an impertinence that the congregation should dare to follow it, and

which does not want to go its own way alone.

## Will be Six Months in the Doctor's Hands.

When the organ is finally reformed and the day comes for its reopening, the congregation pretends to be delighted, but it has a shrewd idea that the days of its liberty are over. The members of the congregation may have ventured to follow afar off an organ driven by a water-engine with a choir in correspondence, but they will not have the audacity to intrude upon an organ played by electricity and assisted by a still more elevated choir. If the congregation, however, be willing, through a sense of politeness, to keep silent, the electric organ will have no such scruples, for its extravagances will be endless. If it consent to play the first voluntary, it will finish up with a

long, melodious howl, for which no one can hold the organist responsible, and it will give melodious toots during the prayers which may be responses, but have not been arranged for; and then in the middle of the Te Deum, through some fit of pure cantankerousness, it will take refuge in a stubborn silence. For six months after the opening it will be in the doctor's hands, and for a year following will not have completely shaken off the habit of a gay and frivolous youth, and the congregation will be torn between two minds—secret satisfaction when the organ is not going and it has a chance of singing free, and a fierce desire to cart it away and have it thrown into the nearest river.

What between building and renewing the organ and adding stops to the organ and tuning the organ, the organ will cost every year in interest on capital and current expenditure enough

money to have kept a missionary in foreign parts or to have supported a minister in a poor district of the city; and what it costs in anxiety to the organist, who is apt to be blamed for everything, and who has generally to spend an hour in its recesses with his coat off before service, and to the congregation in chronic irritation, would, if reduced to money value and multiplied by the number of organ-ridden churches, clear the debt off every foreign mission in the Anglo-Saxon world.

### Choirs are Often Accused of Quarrelling.

My own experience of a choir and also of an organist has been altogether delightful, which is one of my singular mercies of which I am not worthy; but I move about in the world, and I have heard things. As a choir consists, it is presumed, of a number of select persons,

male and female, who have correct ears and rich voices and are lovers of the most delicate and spiritual of the arts —the most refined persons, in fact, in a congregation—one would take for granted that the whole atmosphere of a choir would be full of gentleness and peace. Rumors, however, reach one's ears that the power of quarrelling within certain church choirs can only be exceeded by the high spirit of a body of Irish patriots, and that there is almost nothing so trivial and invisible but that it will set a choir by the ears. It may be the place in the stalls or the singing of a particular part or a correction of the choir-master or a word of approval to another chorister or a remark dropped by one of the choir—so tender are the feelings of a chorister—anything or, for that matter, nothing, will hurt. He will sulk or make unpleasant remarks or resign or drive some other persons out, and then on

some great occasion all the members of the choir will resign and take themselves so seriously that the event will be considered equal in interest to a war. Upon the whole, the choir rather enjoys a crisis of this kind, for it gives stimulus to the artistic temperament. But there are some who do not enter wholly into the enjoyment. One of these is the wretched minister, who finds himself some Sunday in the position of being his own precentor, and who has to be the mediator in every dispute; and the others are the members of the congregation, who are apt to be set on fire by sparks from this musical conflagration, and who are never perfectly certain whether they may not some Sunday have to do their own singing.

## When the Old Tunes Were in Vogue.

Times there are, but possibly they are foolish moments, when one remembers

with fond and wistful regret a country kirk where a precentor raised that time-honored old Scots tune "Martyrdom" with a powerful note, and a congregation of clear-voiced and big-lunged men and women took up the tune, none keeping silence, and sang the air gloriously, with here and there a bass and a tenor, even, perhaps, an alto thrown in to enrich the music. And there are other times when one who ought to have known better things has been much stirred in his heart by hearing the people sing at a mission service one of those tunes which may not be very good music, and may lend themselves to loudness of voice, but which are well called revival tunes because they quicken the people's souls and give expression to their joy as for the first time they realize that God has loved them and has given for their salvation His only and well-beloved Son.

It is well that the praise of God

should have every assistance of good taste and musical art in subordination to the rights of the people, but it is best that men should sing with lips which God has opened and from hearts which have been redeemed at Calvary.

## VII.

### The Pew and the Man In It.

Various changes have been wrought in the interior of the church since the days of our fathers, but no change is more significant than the opening of the pew, which in its way has been almost as great a change as the lowering of the franchise in England and the abolition of political disabilities. One's memory recalls the good old days, which we call good largely because they were old and are now hidden in a mist of reverent affection. One sees the long row of family pews, each carefully secluded from its neighbor and shut in

from the common street of the aisle by a door which was fastened inside by a robust hasp or, in the case of superior pews, by a little brass bolt.

### When the Pew-Owner was of Importance.

If the tenant of the pew belonged to the upper circle of the district, he covered it with cloth—red or green—furnished it with a cushion three inches deep—which contained in its recesses the dust of twenty-five years—and a box for Bibles with a lock, where the books of worship could be kept in security from a stranger's hand. There were also hassocks of a substantial character, not for purposes of kneeling—for no one in such a pew would have thought of such an inconvenient effort—but that people might have their feet comfortably propped. And there were even such delicacies of comfort as an elbow

rest in the pew, so that one fortunate sitter might be able to hold up his head with his hand as he listened to the sermon.

It was an interesting sight, and one cherishes it in grateful remembrance, when the local dignitary came in on Sunday morning to take possession of his mansion and to share in divine worship. The pew-opener, a shrewd old man brought up in the atmosphere of kirks, and whose very face suggested the most abstruse doctrines, who had been speaking on professional subjects with the deacons of the place, and had allowed fifty of the commonalty to pass without more than a faint nod and a reference to the weather—couched in subdued tones—comes forward to receive the chiefs of the synagogue and to lead them to their seats. He goes first down the aisle with stately tread, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, followed by

Dives's wife; after her the children; following them the stranger that was within their gates, and, last of all, contented and superior, Dives himself.

### The Pew Door was Fastened with a Hasp.

On arrival at the mansion-house door the pew-opener, dexterously unlocking the door with one hand and wheeling round on one foot, faces the procession behind the open door as it stretches half way across the aisle and stands there after a little bow, looking straight before him, deferential, yet not unconscious of his place in the hierarchy of the church, and the members of the family file in and take their places till at last there is hardly room for the great man himself. It will be enough, however, if he can just sit down, for in that case the influence of a heavy body will gradually make room for

itself, and the lighter bodies in the pew will have to give up as the service goes on till at last Dives is comfortably settled.

Certainly the door was closed with an effort, and more than once during the service you heard it creak, and could not help hoping—but that was in the days of one's boyhood—that by some fortunate chance the door would one day give way, and Dives, who depended too utterly upon it, might be landed in the aisle. The hasp, however, not to say the hinges also, was strongly made, and the pew-opener saw that everything had been done for safety as well as dignity, and then he processed back again to the door, not unconscious that he had acquitted himself with credit and that he had created at least a sensation by his ceremonious disposal of the rich man and his family in their pew.

### The Pew-Holder Made Himself Comfortable.

Dives unlocks the Bible box with a key which is upon his ring, and distributes the books as if he were presenting prizes to a school, while the mother of the family gives to its youngest members such provision in the way of sweets as will sustain exhausted nature through the next two hours.

There were cases where Dives was unmarried and had no other occupant for his mansion save his honorable self, but he was conducted in all the same, and set himself with dignity at the end of the lonely pew. And if you suppose that any stranger desiring a seat would be put in upon Dives, then you do not understand the discretion of the pew-opener; and if you imagine that a casual, dropping into that church, would himself try to break in upon that majestic vacancy, your imagination is

bold enough, but it has not yet mastered the expression on Dives's face.

## People Then Went to Their Own Churches.

Strangers did not in former days appear in churches unless they were guests with some of the families, because every one had his own church, and he went to it through rain or shine, whoever preached and whatever was going on either there or elsewhere. People boasted in those ancient times that they never wandered, and an absolute and unidentified stranger might have staggered the pew-opener, but being equal to any emergency, he would have conducted him to his own pew, which, for purposes of convenience, was near the pulpit, so that the wanderer might not interfere with any other person's property and might be under surveillance. There was an appearance of solidity

when the church was full, and of respectability; there was also a suggestion of dignity and prosperity, and it is right to add some flavor also of family unity and homely comfort which was most agreeable and comforting to that old-time congregation.

## Open-Handed Hospitality of the Modern Church.

If an old-fashioned person, and one, perhaps, too much enamored of the past, with all its faults, desires to receive a shock, he has only to visit one of the modern churches of the extreme type, which are usually called free and open, as if they were public houses or pieces of waste ground on which rubbish is landed. Openness has been carried to its full length, for not only are there no pew doors and no Bible boxes and no cloth for your back and no cushion into which you can sink—there may be a

mat and there may be hassocks—and hardly any division between one pew and another, but perhaps there are no pews at all, only chairs, and you stick your hymn-book into a rack in the back of your front neighbor's chair, who moves when you do so, and you kneel against that chair—if you are able to kneel at all—and then you push your front neighbor, which he naturally resents. Of course, there is no pew-opener, because there are no pew-doors to open, and more than that, there is no particular place for you to sit, because you can sit where you please and take a different seat at each service if you wish.

### In the Church of To-day All Are Strangers.

No pilgrim nor stranger need be abashed in the modern church, for there is no other person there except people

like himself; all are strangers, since they have no right to an inch of ground, and all are pilgrims, since they need not sit twice in the same place. No one can complain of any person's selfishness, since all things are held in common.

If Dives, locked within his door, suggested exclusiveness, it may be said for him it was the exclusiveness of home, and within the pew there was a little community—the original community of life, which is the family. And if something can be said for general free and openness on the ground of Christian brotherhood and human equality, one still clings to the belief that he is entitled to be with his own people—his wife, that is to say, and his children—in the House of God, and that he is more likely to worship God with reverence when he has some slight privacy.

### The Family Existed Before the Pew.

Possibly a visitor may feel more liberty in a free and open church, but, on the other hand, the family is broken up into units at the door, and no mixed multitude can ever make so strong a congregation or one that appeals so powerfully to the eye as the long line of pews, let us say without doors and furniture, but each containing a family, with the mother at the head of the pew and the father at the foot and the young men and women between. For the family existed before the church, and if the church is not to be a mere possession of priests or a lecture hall, the church must rest on the family.

The pew is a testimony to the family, and ought to be maintained, with its doors removed, and it does not matter whether a man pay $50 a year for his pew or fifty cents. The church authorities should see that the householder

has his pew, with room enough in it for himself, his wife, and the children which God has given them. There is no reason in the world why the rich man should not pay a handsome sum for his church home. And some of us have never been able to understand why an artisan should not give something for his church home also. Surely every man wishes to do what is right in the support of his church.

### Sunday Beggars and Monday Beggars.

Every self-respecting man likes to pay for his home, whether it be large or small, and it touches a man's honor to live in a workhouse, where he pays no rent and depends on the public. There is no necessity that this home feeling and this just independence should be denied in the House of God, but it rather seems a good thing that the man who works and gives to pro-

vide a house where he and his children can live together in comfort and self-respect six days of the week should do his part to sustain the house where they worship God on the seventh day.

He is a poor creature who will allow a rich man to pay his rent for him on weekdays, and I have never been able to see where there is any difference between being a beggar on Sunday and a beggar on Monday.

### Possession of a Pew is a Test of Character.

One, however, wishes to add, and with emphasis, that the possession of a pew in the sense in which a man possesses his house is a test of character and an opportunity for hospitality. There is one kind of man who not only regrets that he cannot now have a door on his pew, but who would have it roofed in if he could, who will resent the introduction of a stranger—al-

though there be plenty of room—as a personal affront, and will order strangers to be removed if, unhappily, they have been placed in his pew by mistake before he arrives. If he only occupy half a pew, the officers of the church dare not put in another set of tenants for the other half, because he will quarrel with them as to which half they are to occupy, as to who is to go in first, as to a hymn-book that has wandered out of its place, or about a friend they brought one day who infringed two inches upon his share of the pew. It is fair to say that the miscreant is no worse in church than he is elsewhere, for he is a churl everywhere—jealous, contentious, inhospitable, unmanageable.

### One Man Whose Pew is Open and Free to All.

But, as a make-weight to this abuse of the pews, take my dear old friend

Jeremiah Goodheart. He is now alone with his gentle, kindly wife, for the children have made homes for themselves; but he keeps the family pew, and will on no account give up a sitting. It sometimes seems to the managers of the church that Mr. Goodheart might take a homeless family in, but they do not press the matter when they remember how long he and his have had that pew to themselves, and how well he uses the vacant space. He has a number of intimates who are now old and gray-headed, and who come from time to time to worship with him and his wife, and feel that they are in right good company. He has also an outer circle of friends which can be numbered by the hundred, and its members are also in the habit of dropping in to sit in that pew; and if he sees a stranger at the church door, Goodheart must needs say a word to him of welcome and good cheer. If the stranger happen to be

a young man, he will take him by the arm and bring him down to his pew, and the chances are he will ask him home to dinner and will tell him never to sit alone in his lodgings, but to count this house his home.

THERE IS A WELCOME AWAITING HIM IN HEAVEN.

And Mistress Goodheart tells her friends with much satisfaction the size of the joint they have on Sundays, because, although their own sons have gone, they never sit down without some young men as guests, and Mr. Goodheart made their acquaintance through the pew. If some family in the church has visitors, and extra sittings are needed, why, then, the children of the family sit in the Goodheart pew and are received with open arms. Bless his white hair and genial face, he never is entirely happy and never enjoys the

sermon unless he has his full contingent of guests; and there are times when he brings one too many, and then the other pew-holders contend as to who shall have him for their guest.

What he is in church he is at home, with an open heart and an open hand, never content unless his friends are coming and going, never angry unless they will not stay and have a meal with him, never so full of joy as when he is doing a good turn or going over old days with those to whom he is bound by a hundred ties of kindly words and deeds. As he has dealt with all men, strangers and friends alike, in his church and in his house, so will God deal by him, and for him we may feel sure there will be a hospitable welcome waiting where the churches of earth have changed into Our Father's House.

## VIII.

### The Genteel Tramps in Our Churches.

It is no exaggeration to say that the use of money is a test of character and a revelation of a man's nature. There are men who lose money by their foolishness—Wastrels; there are men who spend it on their vices—Prodigals; there are men who hoard it with jealousy—Misers; there are men who lay it out in well-doing—they are the Wise Men.

When I say well-doing I am not thinking of that unreasoning and indiscriminate charity which, whether it take the form of alms to a lazy vagabond or a large benefaction for the

creation of paupers, is a curse and not a blessing, a sin and not a duty. We are not to read in a mechanical fashion the advice of our Lord to the young ruler to sell his possessions and give to the poor, for though that might have been the only pledge of sincerity he could give in that day, it would be a great calamity in our day.

If a millionaire were to realize his estate and to bestow the proceeds upon that residuum of our population who will not work so long as they can beg, he would do the greatest injury within his power to his fellow-men. If the same person used his means to give the opportunity of honest work, whereby men could support themselves and their families, he would confer one of the greatest blessings in his power upon his fellow-men.

Whatever may have been the case in ancient times, there can be no question that in our day the man who establishes

a manufactory in a small town and pays fair wages does ten times more good than he who would use his wealth to found an almshouse.

### Head as Well as Heart is Needed in Giving.

When a man's family claims have been properly met, and his business enterprises have been soundly sustained, perhaps the best two things a man can do with his superfluous wealth is to use it to send the knowledge of God to those who sit in darkness, or to bestow the priceless gift of education upon those who hunger and thirst for knowledge. It is unfortunate that many persons have not learned to give, but it is also unfortunate that many people do not know where to give. The head as well as the heart is needed in giving, and giving is a training for one's brain as well as for one's feelings.

There are congregations which bring no intelligence to their giving, and for any good it does half their liberality had better have been flung into the sea. They keep up mission-houses in poor parts of the city, which are simply institutions for the propagation of pauperism, and the congregations they gather are largely made up of people who object to work between meals. Reports are published every year showing the number present at the services and containing harrowing accounts of the misery which has been relieved.

### Congregations are Easy to Find.

As a matter of fact, if you give an able organizer $3000 a year to spend in a downtown district, he will secure you at any time a congregation of about five hundred people; and if the members of the mother church wish to go down and be present at an enthusiastic

meeting, then all that has to be done is for one of its wealthy members to play the host on that evening. The gathering, both in numbers and enthusiasm, will leave nothing to be desired, and the good people of the rich church will go home feeling that they have a flourishing mission and are doing an immense deal of good, while the chances are that they have really no mission in the religious sense of the word, and that their money has done incalculable mischief.

Upon the whole, the mission churches maintained on a principle of lavish expenditure by rich congregations correspond exactly in their moral effect to the almshouses founded by people who have more money than they know what to do with and not enough brains to know how to use it.

Had the money squandered on soup kitchens and clothing clubs and such like schemes for the maintenance of

mendicants and their families been employed for the erection of a proper church, where honest people among the poor might worship God with self-respect, or of sanitary property, where working people might live in decency at moderate rents, or for the creation of a scholarship by which lads poor in money but rich in brains could obtain the higher education, then social reformers would have cause to bless the Church, and the Church would be a means of far greater good in the community.

### When the Minister Has a Soft Heart.

A West End congregation does not, however, need to go to the East End to do mischief, for it can create, if it so please, a nursery of genteel tramps within its own borders. When a minister and his people have the reputation

of a soft heart, and by that is often meant a soft head, the news spreads far and wide, and there is an immediate accession to the number of worshippers. Tradespeople of the lower class who wish to push their business and do not feel sufficiently confident about the goods they sell; young men who have lost their situations because they wouldn't do their work; families of women who would consider it beneath them to do anything for their own living and are adepts in what may be called genteel raiding; incapable men of business whom no bank would trust with $50, but who hope to get $1000 by quoting the Sermon on the Mount—all these gather and sit down within the sheltering walls of this Christian asylum.

### They All Come to Benefit Themselves Financially.

They all come, according to their own story, for the most excellent and

affecting reasons: because their last congregation was cold and they wished to live in a warmer atmosphere; because they have received benefit from the minister's preaching and feel it to be a privilege to be under his care; because they desire to do some good work, and have heard from afar of the zeal of this congregation; but chiefly on account of the spirituality, both of minister and people, which has been as a loadstone drawing these simple souls to their natural home. Their real reason, to put it in plain English, is that they do not care to work for their livelihood as honest folk do, and that they propose to cast themselves on congregational charity. They have come not because they care one cent what the minister preaches nor what he is, provided only he has no discernment, but simply and solely to beg. They are adepts in their own department, and have brought congregational begging to the height of

a fine art. They do not borrow as soon as they arrive, and the more skilful members of the craft will never mention money at all. Their desire, as they explain to the minister in his study with a diffidence and a delicacy which impress him very much if he be a man of simple piety, is simply to have a corner in his church where they can sit and drink in the pure milk of the Word; and their only trouble is that for the first six months they will not be able to pay any seat rent nor to give any contribution to the missionary funds.

### They Talk of the Days When They Were Better Off.

There were days when they were better off, they explain, and then the delight of their life was liberality. There has been a great family reverse, and vague allusions are made to a large sum lost either through the misconduct

of a relative or through the failure of a bank, and now they are compelled to live most economically. Their struggle, the minister is allowed to understand, is very keen; but it was not to talk about such things again to him, but only to assure him of the blessing he had been to them, and their anxiety to be useful members in his church. If they cannot give, they are at least willing to work, and generally by an accident choose a department of Christian service whose head is rich in this world's goods and known to be generous.

Under the eye of such a chief there is no end to the activity of our mendicant friends. They will offer to do anything. They will suggest new schemes of philanthropy; they will drive the old workers crazy by their fussing; and they will go some night, at an inconvenient hour, with half a dollar, which, it oozes out, they have saved for a good cause. As they are

not able to give to the church funds, they make with their own hands some preposterous offertory bags, which they present formally to the office bearers of the church, and which can never be shown.

### How They Distribute Their Trifling Gifts.

And as they have no other means of proving their gratitude to the minister, they call one evening, the man and his wife together, who are colleagues in mendicancy, and ask him to accept a huge muffler, which will protect his throat from the winter cold amid his innumerable labors, and whose colors and construction, if he wore the thing, would render him liable to deposition from the ministry. Leading members of the congregation are faithfully remembered upon their birthdays and at Christmas with cards emblazoned with pious designs and observations; and if

a child be stricken with an anxious and painful complaint like chicken-pox, the inquiries of our mendicant friends are regular and touching. They do not like to trouble the mother, but they have conceived such an affection for the little darling, whom they have watched in church, that they couldn't rest without learning whether the sweet pet had passed a quiet day. They do not wish to be forward, and they do not forget their changed circumstances, but they hope it will not be considered an offence to have brought just a trifle for the angel in her sickness, and they ask the mother to convey an unholy-looking piece of candy to the little lamb. There are mothers and mothers, but the chances are that the mother will be considerably moved and, on the whole, well pleased by this interest in her child, and although she will put the gift promptly in the fire, she will not forget the givers at Christmas time.

### When They Have Spun Their Web Successfully.

When the spiders have spun their web of delicate filaments, and have stretched it from corner to corner of the church, it is amazing how many flies, not all of them simple, they have caught and how much spoil they have obtained. The wardrobes of the church, both of men and women, are at their disposal, and every month you are reminded of some old friend when you see our mendicant, and it is quite interesting to trace the "go-to-meeting" clothes of the congregation reappearing in new circumstances. Their house rent is paid, in turn, by a set of good Samaritans, each of whom believes that he is the only one who has ever been allowed to do this kindness, and who does it under promise of secrecy, lest shrinking natures, poor but proud, should be hurt, and that self-respect,

which is now, as they explain, their only possession, should be destroyed. Some kindly doctor in the district gives his attendance, as is usual with those men, without money and without price. Medical comfort in the shape of cordials, jellies, fruit, delicate food, pour into the house with such a constant stream that it is not wonderful that dear little Alice does not recover quickly and that the assistance of the family has to be called in to use up the dainties.

Later, little Alice, who has been taken around, elaborately wrapped up and looking most piteous, to thank her benefactors in person, and who comes on most awkward occasions, has to be sent, through sheer pity, for a month into the country, and the fond family who cannot bear to live without little Alice—they never can quite shake off the habits of past prosperity—have to accompany the convalescent.

Borrowing From Every One They Meet.

Time would fail me to tell of the loans which they obtain from almost everybody, rich and poor. Which are asked in every case in circumstances of the last extremity and with a perfect agony of shame; which is the first money ever borrowed by the family, and is to be repaid in the course of fourteen days exactly; for which security is offered in the shape of an ancient gold brooch—the last heirloom of the family. It is only after the long raid has ended, and the mendicants have departed to another West End church at a safe distance, that people begin to compare notes and add up accounts, when it is discovered that at the lowest estimate the family have lived upon the congregation at the rate of $1000 a year.

This calculation is, of course, ex-

clusive of what they earn for themselves; but, as a rule, this would not swell the balance. If any form of work be suggested to the female mendicant in reduced circumstances, she struggles with her emotions, but cannot conceal the fact that she is very much hurt. It may be foolish, she explains amid her tears, but her poor father, who has generally been in the army, had often said that no daughter of his name should ever come to work, and she feels it due to his memory to sustain this noble attitude, and one is so much ashamed at his brutal suggestion that he willingly pays an indemnity.

### When the Mendicant is a Tradesman.

It is of no use attempting to get a situation for a young fellow of this tribe, since either the place you get for him does not suit his peculiar ability, or

after he has been there for three days there is a difference between him and the manager of the office, which shows that the manager has not been accustomed to deal with gentlemen; and, of course, as the young man's mother tells you, her son could not forget the history of the family.

If the mendicant be a tradesman, and you send him customers, for which, indeed, he has been touting, the things are so badly made that no one can wear them, and the price is so high that no one is inclined to pay it; and then the tradesman generally belongs to that high and mighty class which will not condescend to make anything except in the good old-fashioned way; and especially will not, even at the point of starvation, lower the price. As a matter of fact—naked fact—this high-spirited tradesman does not want to work so long as silly people will support him.

### When the Minister's Eyes are Opened.

By and by even the kindliest of ministers, with the growth of intelligence in the Christian church, will see through this class, and will promptly subject them to a shrewd labor test, declining to mix up together piety and beggary, and refusing to believe that anybody has ever got any good from his ministry who will not work for his living. One also expects that a congregation of Christian people, the most credulous body on earth, will pluck up courage and at the same time rally their common-sense and refuse to make the Christian society a dumping-ground for genteel tramps, and the "Weary Williams" of religion will have to find out some new way of evading the law that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat.

And the money which has been saved from these parasites might go to swell the fund for the comfortable support of retired ministers.

## IX.

### Is the Minister an Idler?

No man has more reason to be grateful to his public than a minister, for I know no servant who is more kindly treated. While there are, no doubt, in so large a body as the Christian Church censorious hearers and ill-mannered congregations, just as there are lazy and cantankerous ministers, yet the average congregation is charitable in its judgment of its minister, patient under his failings, keenly appreciative of any good work he does, and most responsive to all his good offices. There are not many substantial complaints which a

sane-minded and good-tempered minister can bring against the average congregation, but he has sometimes a grudge against his friends which he does not express, but which often rankles in his heart. It is not anything they say nor anything they do; it is the quiet and perhaps unconscious assumption on their part that he has not enough work to do or that he has a considerable quantity of time at his disposal.

Were he to depend upon their words, then this suspicion would never cross his mind, because they have a trick, and a kindly one, of saying to him on Monday that he must be very tired after preaching two such wonderful sermons, and he, being only human, is apt then to imagine that he is exhausted after such an intellectual output. At other times they remonstrate with him in a casual way, after the talk about the weather, because he has been over-

working, and tell him that they cannot imagine how he is able to do so much. All this is friendly and comforting, and the minister has an agreeable sense that his work is appreciated, and that he is one of the austere toilers of the world.

### The Minister's Time is Not Considered.

As he grows older, however, and begins to attach more importance to the attitude of a person's mind than the irresponsible words which fall from his lips, he has an uneasy sense that people are not so very much impressed by his exacting labors and his crowded hours. Delightful ladies, and all ladies are delightful, invite him to afternoon tea and such like functions, where he will be the only gentleman present; or if there be another, he will be an elderly man, long retired from business.

While the minister thanks the lady for her thought of him, it comes to his mind that her own husband will not be at the pleasant little party nor her own sons, because they are too busy, and she would not dream of asking a barrister or a merchant or a doctor or a journalist, unless it were some great affair to which all society was going. It would seem to her absurd to take a busy man away from his work, even to spend an hour with her and other equally charming women. The other men would not come because they could not. They must do their work. The minister is invited because, as his hostess assumes, he has no work to prevent his coming. And she would be apt to consider him somewhat less than courteous, and certainly not obliging, if he refused; and if he did so on account of his time being occupied, even her charity might fail her, and she might allow herself to think that he had some other reason.

Was he not sitting in his study? Why might he not as well be in her house? And she would never understand it was his only chance that afternoon of mastering a necessary book. Had he not passed her house half an hour before, and if he could go out for a walk, why might he not have spent the time in her garden, and he cannot explain to her that he was going to visit a case of sickness.

Secretaries of philanthropic societies will ask him to go down from a distant suburb to the heart of the city, and second a resolution at a public meeting of eight elderly gentlemen and seventy-seven females of uncertain age, together with four genteel mendicants who have come to see whether they can borrow five shillings from some good Samaritan.

## Faddists of All Sorts Harass the Minister.

It was an excellent society, and it was necessary its committee should be re-elected, and the minister said so at the length of ten minutes, but the bitter question was in his heart as he went home, tired and fretted: Was this the best use he could make of his time, and would the secretary, indefatigable though he was and full of push, have asked a business man—that is, a man really busy—to have left his office in the heat of the work and spend three hours of his time in going out to a suburb and saying what was of no importance to people on whom it would have no special effect? The minister knows, and the secretary knows, and everybody knows that the business man would have said no in the shortest form of words, and no person would have been indignant that he should say so,

and every person would have held him to be a foolish man if he had gone.

Such an expenditure of time is impossible except for superannuated gentlemen and for ministers. And, of course, if ministers are simply fiddling away their time in the house reading magazines or looking out at the windows, or if they are only gadding around their districts paying complimentary calls and talking about the weather, it would be a good thing, if only for a change, that they should spend an afternoon going and coming to a meeting and convincing the audience that they ought to re-elect the committee.

Faddists of every description drop into a minister's study, preferring the forenoon, because they are sure to find him at home, and explain to him at enormous length that we are the descendants of the lost ten tribes; that moral evils would be largely done away with

if we ate carrots instead of meat; that the work carried on by some person whose name the minister can't pronounce, at a place in Asia Minor of which he never heard, and on the sole responsibility of the man who draws the salary in Asia Minor, is the most important in the range of foreign missions. Were any one of these voluble people, and they are only three out of a hundred, each with a bee in his bonnet, to visit a merchant's office, he would not likely be allowed into the principal's room, and if he were, he would soon again be in the outer office.

The effrontery of a faddist is amazing, but it has limits; and after a little experience the faddist leaves the merchant alone, and, as a rule, he does not even attempt the doctor, but he settles down as by an instinct and with a feeling of being at home in the minister's study. If the minister be a really good man, the faddist enjoys himself very

much, for he has got a helpless victim; but if the minister be an imperfectly sanctified man, then the faddist goes to the door almost as quickly as from the merchant's room, but the minister knows that his life is in the power of the faddist's tongue.

### Ministers Have Little Time for Themselves.

What annoys the minister, and all the more so that he cannot express his annoyance, is that all those people believe that he does not really know what to do with his time, and that it is at every person's disposal. As a matter of fact, the conscientious minister of a city church works harder than any person in the community, except a doctor in general practice, a journalist on a daily paper, and a seamstress under the sweater's lash. He may sit as late as he please at night—and, indeed, must sit till, say, midnight at

least—in order to keep up with his reading, but he must be up early in the morning, because a business man will come in to see him before nine o'clock, and by that time he must have opened his first mail, which will amount to about twelve letters, and if he thinks it necessary—and in a city it is necessary—must have gathered at a glance what happened yesterday in his community and in the world. From nine to one he is at work preparing for the pulpit, for week-night services, for classes, and for miscellaneous church and public work, as hard as he can, and the hour which he loses through callers has to be made up with interest late at night. He allows himself some food at one o'clock, although very often he has to take it cold, because some ingenious beggar knows that is the best time to find him, and in the height of the season he grudges the loss of his meal-time, and longs for the day when

American invention, fertile in ideas and parsimonious of time, will invent a liquid food which he can take in from a pipe while he is studying.

### When He Returns Home After a Busy Day.

If he has not promised to second the appointment of a committee of forty members to manage a home for twenty girls, then he spends the time from about two to six visiting people who are sick, or who have lost friends, or who are in religious anxiety, or who are suffering worldly loss, or who have just come to his church, or who are just leaving his church, or whom he wishes to enlist for work, or whom he has not seen for some time and desires to keep in touch with. He returns home in the evening, not because his work is done, because this kind of work is never done and never can be done, even if he began at

nine in the morning and continued till nine at night, but because no man can stand more than five hours of visiting.

Upon his return—and I confess this frankly—the minister allows himself a little more food, but again it has to be kept for him, because another visitor who has missed him in the afternoon discovers from a guileless waitress, who has just come to the minister's house and has not yet learned the duties of a minister's servant, the hour at which the unfortunate man will get his next meal, and has been waiting for half an hour to ask the help of the minister for a cause which in two cases out of three is a mere excrescence upon philanthropy, and a cause with which the minister has not the remotest connection.

People who do not know might suppose that after the minister had taken his very modest meal he would be at liberty to sit with his wife and children

in the family room and discharge one of his duties as the head of the household as well as to enjoy the sweetest pleasure of the day. It is a rare thing that this unfortunate man has an evening to himself, because immediately after dinner he has to go to a service or to a meeting at his church, and while the members of the congregation distribute themselves among the different evenings, which is quite right, he must be present at everything, or if he is not, then that from which he is absent begins to fail.

### When He Hoped for an Evening to Himself.

If he has an evening to spare, then some member of his congregation will ask him to come to a meeting on behalf of something or other in which he is interested, and there are reasons why the minister cannot refuse. Likely as not that very gentleman had been saying

last week that the minister was overworked and must not make so many engagements, but when the time comes that he has an axe of his own to grind he will not have the slightest hesitation in asking the minister to turn the grindstone. And indeed the public work of the minister is much increased by his own people, who give the secretaries and the faddists and the rest of the brigands letters of introduction which conclude, "I hope you will grant Mr. Tootle's request as a personal favor to myself." The same gentleman may only do this once in six months, but then a hundred other people in the church will do the same at intervals, and so the minister is sold into bondage by those of his own household.

### Why He Seldom Has an Evening to Himself.

Were I a layman, and some paid secretary who has nothing else to do—

as it sometimes appears to me—except to write unnecessary letters and get up wearisome meetings and harass ministers, came to me and asked me to tease my minister into leaving his own work and attending the secretary's meeting, I would express my mind to the secretary in the language which might be given me in that hour by a kindly Providence, and one minister at least would be saved from the secretary. If the religious public has ever any misgiving about the money which is spent on secretaries, and the usefulness of their work, it may be some consolation for that public to know that as long as there are paid secretaries for philanthropic societies, no city minister will ever be allowed to idle away his time, either in reading modern theology or in talking with his family.

Suppose, however, that by some extraordinary mercy the minister has an evening to himself, actually to him-

self—which will come about six times in the winter season—and he proposes to read aloud to his wife, or that she should give him a little music, or that the family should look over some art books together, or—for I am not hiding his little weaknesses—that they should play a game together, his wife, his children, and himself. The bell rings, and the minister looks at his wife; he knows what that means. It is at such moments that his belief in a personal devil, whose ingenuity is in keeping with his malignancy, is firmly established.

### Neither His Time Nor His Privacy Respected.

It is not that the caller would naturally suggest Satan to a stranger, for he is simply a respectable, not very brilliant, citizen, belonging to the minister's congregation or perhaps to some other minister's congregation, who

might have called at some other hour, and would have called at another time if he had wished to see a merchant, but who breaks in upon the minister's privacy with the vague idea in his mind that as the minister had all the day to himself, his evening hours are at the mercy of the public. As regards the visitor's errand, he might as well have written, but he felt it would be better discussed at a personal interview—fifteen minutes would give ample opportunity. As it is, this garrulous gentleman sits down for the evening in the minister's study, and when he goes, full of regret for having occupied so much of the minister's time, the children have gone to bed and the minister's wife is sitting lonely in the empty drawing-room.

There is no other man who suffers after this fashion, not even a doctor, for people do not saunter in and sit in his consulting-room when they ought to be

with their families, and he wishes to be with his. Doctors have a hard life, for they are liable to be called out at any hour and to be worked from morning till night, but they are at least protected from casual visits and twaddling conversation by the simple fact that if a man comes to their consulting-room, he is not allowed to stay longer than fifteen minutes, and he has to pay for the time he stays. Of course, a minister is at the service of his congregation at all reasonable hours, and at any hour he is ready for the service of the dying and bereaved; but if every stranger who has no claim upon him, and who comes to him about his own affairs, had to pay a reasonable fee, and this fee were doubled if he came in the evening, then a minister's children might come to know their father and a minister's wife would not have to complain that she saw hardly anything of her husband.

## Ministers Need Time to Rest and Think.

When a merchant leaves his office and goes to his home he would be astounded if a cotton broker called and proposed to do business. A working-man has rest in his own home, but a minister's home is a thoroughfare along which all kinds of people travel. Why should not a minister's home be as sacred as that of a merchant? Why should he not have his periods of daily rest as much as the barrister? When will it be understood by congregations and by the public that if a man is to keep abreast with the thought of the day, and master the best thought of the past, if he is to discharge aright his pastoral duties and take his proper part in the greater movements of the commonwealth, his time must be guarded from intrusion and his energies gathered in from the dissipation

of petty meetings? When will people understand that his work is as serious and as exacting as that of any other professional man, and that while his time belongs unto his Master, as well as his talents and everything he possesses, it does not belong to paid officials and garrulous callers? When that is clearly understood, then it will dawn for the first time on certain minds that while the minister has many functions to perform, one of them is not to be the substitute in society for busy men or a talking machine at second-rate religious meetings.

## X.

### The Minister and His Vacation.

There is no wholesome and sensible minister who does not wish to have the good will of every class in his congregation, but he especially covets the respect and confidence of the young men. This is not because they are wiser than their elders nor because they are more spiritual, but because they are unconventional and sincere to the last degree.

A woman, on account of her goodness and reverence, will respect a minister because of his office; a young man will only respect him because of himself. If the minister be unreal, shifty, cowardly, or lazy, then although he had

been ordained twelve times and is as eloquent as Apollos and has a melting pulpit voice and a charming private manner, young men will see through him and despise him and have nothing to do with him, and will refuse to go to church on his account, while, on the other hand, although the minister be not very clever and cannot preach deep sermons and has a habit of talking plainly and does not know many religious parlor tricks, if he be straight and hard working and fearless in thought as well as deed, they will go to hear what he has to say and will stand up for him when his back is turned and will drop in to see him in his study and will consult him when they have got into a scrape. They are not judges of sanctity, and are apt to depreciate really good men because they are sometimes weakly and effeminate, but they are infallible judges of manliness, and, above all things, they believe in a manly minister. They do not ask

that he should play games, for he may be growing old or he may be crippled in body, but they do ask that he play the game of life bravely and honorably.

The true minister is perfectly satisfied to be judged by the young men's standard—how he plays the big game—but he is sometimes concerned because young men think that at one point he has a special advantage, and he is the last man to desire favors on the field. He does not want to be shielded from criticism nor to be given into on account of his position nor to be petted in any fashion, but to do his work and take his chances and suffer his reverses and fight his battle like any other man. And, therefore, the minister is justly sensitive about one subject of criticism, and that is his holidays.

Last summer, let us suppose, he was spending the month of August in the country, doing nothing worth mentioning, except walk and climb and fish and

golf and drive and ride and fifty other things he did when he was a boy. He had earned his holiday by eleven months' preaching, teaching, studying, presiding, advising, comforting, rebuking, visiting, organizing, and fifty other things he never thought he would ever come to do when he was a boy. His conscience was quite at ease at the close of the day, though he had not written a word, because there was no sermon to preach on Sunday; and though he had not visited a person, because there was not a person to visit, and he congratulated himself because through the length of the long idle days he was gathering strength of body and reviving his mind for his winter's work.

## A Visitor Who Was Warmly Welcomed.

One evening a bicycle came along the lonely road at full pace and pulled up

at the gate, and through the garden came a rider, clad in light undress, bareheaded, his face burned to a chocolate color, covered with dust, pleasantly tired with his spin of forty miles, but full of health and strength and gladness. He challenged the minister to tell the truth as between man and man whether he knew him.

Knew him! Upon the whole, and making a virtue of truthfulness, the minister admitted that he did, for this was the young fellow who sat at the end of the front seat in the transept on Sunday mornings, and on Sunday evenings kept order in an East End school for boys, and was always ready to look after some other young fellow, and was as good a sort of man as could be made.

He was taken with triumph and shouting into the cottage, and after a wash and a stupendous meal the minister and he wandered along the hillside and talked about many things, and came

back and sat in the garden amid the smell of the flowers, till they could no longer speak for sleep. In the morning they climbed the hill behind and viewed the country, and then the young man went on his way, and at the corner of the road he said farewell; and as he did so he mournfully shook his head, for he was making for the nearest railway station, and the next day he would be hard at work in the hot city. "My last day," he said to the minister as they parted, "and it has been a jolly one," and although the young man did not grudge the minister the extra fortnight he was going to have, the minister could not help feeling that they had not parted on equal terms, but that he was thought to have the best of it.

### Counting Up the Vacation Days.

When that happy summer day had become only a pleasant memory and

winter held the land, the two were sitting together again in the minister's study—this time before the blazing logs. They were talking of many things—among others that garden with its wealth of carnations—and the minister charged the young man with his secret thought, and declared that he believed every young man had the same idea in the background of his mind. It was agreed to have a debate there and then, and the minister undertook to prove that he had fewer holidays than a clerk in an office, and that not for the sake of arguing a ridiculous position, but because he believed it to be the truth. The young man was delighted to take the opposite side.

It was indeed a simple question of arithmetic to put two sets of figures down upon a sheet of paper and subtract the lesser from the greater number; the balance left would decide the debate.

As the minister had a city parish and a considerate congregation, he was more generously treated than many of his brethren, and was allowed in the course of the year a six weeks' holiday, which he divided into a month at the close of summer, and a fortnight in the spring-time, when the heavy work of winter had been finished. And this made forty-two days. Between January and December he very occasionally had a day in the country outside holiday times, or half a day in the city, wherein he followed his own pleasure. The country day very often meant golf, and the city half-day, hunting through a library and prowling among the book-shops. Let such odds and ends be set down in all at eight days, and the minister's vacation amounted to fifty days.

## When the Total was Written Down.

When the minister himself wrote down the total his opponent felt that it was hardly worth stating his case. As the minister insisted and furnished the young man with a sheet of paper and a pencil the debate seemed to grow into a comedy.

"Twelve days is the rule in our office, and one is lucky if he gets away in August, for he may be put off with April," said the young man. And he was already deducting twelve from fifty and wondering what the minister would say to a majority of thirty-eight.

"Does your furlough," questioned the minister, "include Sundays in the twelve days?" The young man admitted it did not. And so the figure twelve was changed to fourteen, but that did not make any great difference.

"Is your office open on Christmas

Day?" continued the minister. "I think not; nor on New Year's Day, nor Easter Monday, nor Whit Monday. By the way, unless I am mistaken you have the day after Christmas, too, and another day at Easter time. We are coming along nicely; that makes six days you had not reckoned, and then there is a bank holiday about the beginning of August, which you avoid when you are arranging your yearly holiday. Where are we now? Twenty-one days, I declare—three weeks. It is little enough for a man who works so hard, but it is better than you had reckoned."

"Yes, it reduces your majority, but it still stands at a respectable figure—twenty-nine days more to the minister than to the clerk."

"Perhaps," replied the minister, "but what a shameful thing it is that your firm, which has such a good name and does such a large business, should work their clerks the whole of Saturday

instead of giving them a good half holiday. Nothing, I should say, would be more pleasant for a young fellow than to be able to take a run into the country on his bicycle on Saturday afternoon, when the flowers are just beginning to come out and the hedgerows have their first green, or to have four hours' skating through clear, clean, bracing winter air. I pity you," said the minister with sympathy, "not having the Saturday half holiday. You are as badly off as I am myself, to whom Saturday is the second hardest day of the week."

### When the Minister Envies the Layman.

The minister arose and threw another log upon the fire, for he was a generous man and also had some sense of humor, and did not wish to put his friend to confusion.

"Never thought of that," said the

young man ingenuously; "it is quite true. I remember pitying you one day when I was going to skate and came in to see whether you would go with me, and found you grinding at your second sermon."

"Well," said the minister, "half a day for fifty-two weeks comes to twenty-six whole days, and deducting the two half holidays counted into your regular vacation, that leaves twenty-five days to be added to the twenty-one, which makes forty-six, unless my poor head is wrong in the addition.

"Oh!" said the minister, "I am right, am I? You stand now forty-six against my fifty. I must congratulate you upon your minority. No minister complains of his work, not even of the push and anxiety of Saturday, but I tell you honestly, Dick, there are times when he envies a layman his Sunday, for the Sunday is the layman's day of rest and the minister's day of toil. On

that day most people have a little longer sleep in the morning—though very likely you rise at five o'clock on Sunday morning to study Hebrew—and then they have a leisurely breakfast—for why should they hurry, it is not a working day? Between breakfast and church time they talk about all kinds of things and turn over books and read letters that have come from abroad, and have the sense of being at their ease. If it be fair weather they take the longest road to church, walking through a garden or a park, and they saunter churchward with unembarrassed minds. The father sits with his family in their pew and can give his mind to the worship without distraction and without fear. Perhaps he never thinks about the minister's wife, who sits like a widow in her pew with her children as orphans, for the head of her household is that day on his hardest duty, and has so much to do in leading other people's

worship that he can hardly be said to have rest enough of mind to worship himself. Please don't interrupt," for the young man was beginning to ask terms of surrender.

### Once the Minister Had a Sunday to Himself.

"Do you know," said the minister as he looked into the dancing firelight, "that some years ago I had a Sunday to myself with my family, and I can still taste its sweetness. We started discussions on Bible characters and religious subjects after breakfast, and I found out for the first time what my boys were thinking about. We hunted up books which had been mentioned, and I read favorite passages from the poets and showed rare editions and bits of binding which I kept locked up from the light and dust. We gossiped, we loitered, we hung over treasures. We

took tea in the garden, we talked of old days, we made plans for the future. Why, I walked with my family to church, with no weight on my mind and no reason for hurry. So keenly did I enjoy the day that I resolved to taste it to the last drop.

"Do you think I went into the vestry before service because it was my vestry, and instructed the minister about the notices because it was my church? Certainly not. I went in through the front door, like any other member of the congregation, and nodded affably to the officials as I passed. I walked up the aisle behind my family and sat at the end of my pew like any other head of a household. After service I did go to the vestry, and having been admitted, thanked the preacher for his sermon as one of his hearers, and then went home talking about the service with my boys, for it was another man's sermon and I could enlarge upon its good points.

That afternoon, having time at my disposal, I visited a hall downtown where a man with a gift of his own was teaching two hundred unskilled laborers the elements of religion, and came home mightily refreshed, and then we read again and talked, and my family and I became almost intimate, because we had leisure and it was Sunday.

"At evening service I had the pleasure of picking up a young man at the door who was waiting for a seat, and taking him to my pew, and explaining to him that he might always have that seat in the evening, and that I was glad he had come, as we were going to have a good sermon. He looked curiously at me, and was about to say something when I anticipated him and explained that I was not the minister of the church that day, but simply a hearer like himself. I had more talk with my family after service—the pleasant rambling but not unprofitable conversation

of people who were not tired nor overstrung, and so the day of rest closed in kindly fellowship and inward peace. We must all make sacrifices, Dick, but the hardest one that a minister has to make is his Sunday, for it is to the injury of his own soul and also of his family. Be thankful for your quiet Sundays and guard them jealously for the rest of mind and body."

"You have proved your case," said Dick; "adding fifty Sundays and twenty-five half Saturdays, I make my vacation ninety-six days against your fifty."

## There is No End to the Church Work.

"It is mean," said the minister, "to triumph over a beaten foe, especially when he is such a good fellow, but figures cannot quite represent the case, because there is the question of the

different kind of work done, say, in an office and in a study. I know that business is exacting, that it means a steady grind, and that it is full of surprises and disappointments and the chance of great reverses, but the business man has his own advantages. For one thing, there is a limit to his work, and when he comes home in the evening he leaves his work behind him. But there is no limit whatever to the minister's work. It is ever hanging over him, ever distracting his thoughts, ever exasperating his nerves, ever reproaching his conscience. When he allows himself a social evening, he does not meet with the other guests on equal terms, because they have written their last letter and discharged their last duty for the day, and when they go home it will be to finish the last chapter of a pleasant book and go to bed; but he tore himself away from half-finished work, and when his friends are sleeping

the light will be burning on his desk. Besides—and, Dick, you cannot imagine what this means—the merchant knows that he can do so much work in eight hours, because he is dealing with affairs; but the minister never knows what he can do, because he is dealing with ideas. It is the necessity of production, even when the mind will not produce, which grates upon the nerves of a minister and is apt to break down his health.

"The journalist writes every day, but he has something new to write about; the literary man writes when he is inclined; the minister has to write on an old subject—although the greatest which can engage the mind—and he has to write whether his mind is bright or dull. Possibly no man has moments of such joy—when he is inspired; certainly no man has such hours of depression—when he has fallen beneath his subject. It is only by patient reading and unceasing prayer that he can

accomplish his duty, and then he is ever strained to the utmost, and never knows the rest of the man who does his work with time and strength and ideas to spare. When the minister in active service lies down to die he will be giving directions in his last conscious moments about a letter that had not been answered, and sending explanations to a family that has not been visited, and when his mind begins to wander, it will be among texts with which he has struggled and efforts which he has made in vain."

## Longer Vacations Should be the Rule.

"He ought to have two months every year," cried Dick, "and when I am a deacon I'll see that my minister has a six months' holiday in addition every seven years, in order that he may begin again as a new man in mind and body."

"You are a good fellow, Dick, and you're wise for your years, and if the Church treated her ministers after this fashion she would reap all the gain. For every new idea which comes to the minister's mind, and every new book he reads, and every new sight he sees, and every new gallery he visits during his holidays pass into his words and into his life, and the thoughtfulness and generosity of congregations would come back to their own souls with usury of reward."

## XI.

### The Revival of a Minister.

It was not that the minister had become too old, for he was still in the prime of life; or that his health had failed, for he was stronger than in the days of his youth; or that he had ceased to study, for he was a harder reader than ever; or that he had lost touch with the age, for he was essentially a modern thinker. It was not that he was less diligent in pastoral work or less skilful in organization, nor was it that he had quarrelled with his congregation, or his congregation with him, nor was it that the district had changed or that the church had been left without people.

He preached as well as ever he did, and with much more weight and wisdom than twenty years ago. There were as many members on the roll, and as much money raised, and as much work done, and the church had as great a reputation. It was difficult to lay your finger upon anything wanting in minister or people, and yet the minister was conscious and the people had a vague sense that something was wrong. The spirit of the congregation was lower, their discharge of duty was flatter, their response to appeals was slower, their attendance at extra services was poorer. There was less enthusiasm, less spontaneity, less loyalty. After fifteen years of service in the same place, addressing the same people, and saying, of necessity, the same things, and moving about in the same district, the minister, without any fault on his part, but simply through an infirmity of human nature, had grown a little weary. He had lost

freshness, not of thought nor of expression, but of spirit; and there was not in him now that buoyancy of soul and that hopefulness of tone and that perpetual joy of speech which once had attracted people and won their hearts. And, on their part, the people had lost freshness toward him; not respect for him nor gratitude for his past service nor appreciation of his present work, but their sense of expectation from him and their affectionate delight in him and their joy in speaking about him. Their pulses were not stirred when he preached, nor did a visit from him make an event, nor would his absence make any great blank in their lives. There was still an honest affection between the minister and his people, but it had lost the passion and romance of past years. It was now undemonstrative and well regulated; perhaps a trifle too sober and calm to be called affection.

The people had grown so accustomed to their minister, his appearance, his voice, his way of thinking, his tricks of manner, that they were able to criticise him and note his faults with much accuracy. He did not care to be contradicted, and was apt to be irritated when his plans were opposed; he was too fond of certain lines of thought, and did not always preach to edification; he was apt to be too much with a few friends, and did not hold himself sufficiently at the disposal of all; he gave too much attention to outside work, and sometimes neglected his pastoral duty; he insisted upon using his leisure time as he pleased, and did not seem to remember that he ought not to have had any leisure time; he was apt to grumble when extra duties were put upon him, and was not always gracious when asked to do more than his own work. Ten years ago no one had dared to hint at those faults, for he would have been

torn in pieces by his fellow-members, as an evil-minded and unreasonable man. The minister was very much then what he is now, but his faults then were lost in high spirits and earnestness and kindly feeling and devotion to spiritual duty. He was perfect then in the glamour of the morning light; he is an ordinary man now whose imperfections are clearly seen in the glare of noonday. The minister is also able now to look at his people from a distance and to judge them with an impartial mind, while once they were to him altogether lovely, without spot or blemish or any such thing, and you might have more safely criticised a bride's appearance to her bridegroom during the honeymoon than have found fault with this man's congregation. Whether it be that his eyes are clearer or his heart is colder, he is under no delusions now; and although he would not say such things in public, he knows quite well wherein his people

come short. Some of them are hopelessly bigoted in their own views, and are not open even to the best light, which he is apt to think is his own. Some of them are so liberal that they have hardly any faith, and he forgets to remind himself that for their lack of faith he is responsible. Some of them are so worldly that the highest appeals of religion have no effect upon their lives, and some of them so ungenerous that they will hardly support the best of causes. He feels keenly that young people whom he trained and loved are no longer true to him, but prefer other voices, and are as enthusiastic about others as once they were about him; and he misses little acts of kindness, which are no longer rendered him, and which he valued, not for their own value, but because they were the sacraments of friendship. He still believes his congregation to be better than any other he knows, he still remembers their

loyalty in years past; but the days of first love are over, and his heart is sometimes heavy.

One evening the office bearers of the church had been meeting, and when the business was done they drifted into talk about the church life and about their minister. They were, upon the whole, a body of honorable, sensible, good-hearted, and straightforward men, who desired to do their best by their minister, and not to vex him in any way; who always took care that he had a proper salary and a good holiday; who would never complain without reason, and who would never dream of asking any man to resign, and setting him adrift after a long service without a pension. But they were not satisfied with the state of affairs, and after much talking up and down, suggesting, hinting, indicating, qualifying, it was almost a relief when Mr. Judkin, their

chairman, and a strong man in word and deed, gave expression to their minds.

"There is no man," he said, "I respect more thoroughly than our minister, for he has worked hard and made our congregation what it is. He is well read and a good preacher, and no one can say a word against his life or conduct; but there is no question, and I think it is better that it should be said instead of being felt in secret, that somehow or other our minister is losing his hold upon the people, and that the congregation is not what it used to be in tone and in heart. My impression, brethren, is that while it might be a risk for us, and very likely we would never get any one who could do for us what our minister has done in the past, that he has finished his work and both sides would be better to have a change." And when Mr. Judkin looked round he saw that he had been understood, and was encouraged to continue to the end.

"Our minister has so good a position in the church and his reputation is so high that he could easily obtain another congregation if he wished. In fact, I have reason to believe that he has had opportunities of making a change, but has always refused to entertain the idea. There is no man in the congregation who would ask the minister to leave—certainly I shall not; but I am not sure but that a new beginning would be the best thing for the minister, and also, I am bound to add, might be a good thing for us. One thing I would like to say more, and that is about the finance. We are not a poor church and we will always be able to pay our way, but we have a pretty heavy debit balance, and there was rather a poor response to the last appeal from the pulpit. If the congregation were in good heart, the necessary $2000 could have been got in a week."

There was a pause, during which

several brethren conveyed by looks and nods to Mr. Judkin that he had expressed their mind; and then the silence was broken by Mr. Stonier, who was distinguished in the congregation and outside of it by extreme parsimony in money matters, an entire absence of sentiment, and a ghastly frankness of speech. It was felt when he took up the speaking, that if Mr. Judkin had placed the nail in position, Mr. Stonier would hammer it in to the head, but you never can tell. "This," said Mr. Stonier, "is a conference, I suppose, when any man can say anything he pleases, and there are no rules of order. For myself, I did not know that we were going to sit to-night in judgment on the minister, and I didn't know that Mr. Judkin and the rest of you were going to ask him in some roundabout, gentlemanly, Christian, high-toned fashion to look out for another place. Oh, yes; that is just what you are after, but you

are such a set of pussy-cats that you won't speak out and say what you mean! For myself, I've been a seat-holder in the church for fifteen years, and when I came here the church was nearly empty, and now it's quite full, and the minister has done fifteen years' hard work. Now, I do not set up to be a philanthropist, and I never gave a penny for the "conversion of the Jews," nor to the "Society for Supplying Free Food to Street Loafers," nor to any other of the schemes you gentlemen advocate. I am not what is called a large giver, but I hope I'm an honest man; and I tell you that if I had a man in my office who had served me fifteen years and done his work well, and I proposed to get rid of him because I was tired seeing the same man always at his desk and the same writing in the ledger, I should consider myself a scamp; and I thank God I never have done such a thing with any of my staff.

If you can find any man who has been in my office and been dismissed because I wanted to see a new face, then I'll give $100 to Timbuctoo or any other mission you like." No one expected to earn the prize, for it was well known that although Mr. Stonier was as hard as nails to miscellaneous charity, he was an excellent master in his own office.

"As regards the deficit in the church funds, if that is the ground on which the minister is going to be dismissed, I'm prepared to pay the whole sum myself; and I do it, mark you, as a token of respect and gratitude—gratitude, see you, gentlemen, for fifteen years' honest work." No sooner had this outspoken man sat down than Mr. Lovejoy, the kindest and sweetest soul in all the congregation, who had been very restless for some time, ventured on speech.

"I do not wish to argue with my dear brethren who have spoken, for Brother

Judkin is too strong for me, and no person could reply to Brother Stonier with his handsome offer. Most generous, and just like his kind heart, of which I have had experience for many years in my little charities; but that's a secret between Brother Stonier and me. What I want to say is that I love our minister for what he is and for what he was to me in the time of my great sorrow. When . . . I lost my beloved wife he brought the Lord's consolation day by day to my heart, and our pulpit will never be the same to me without our minister." And that was all that Mr. Lovejoy said.

It seemed, however, to touch a hidden spring in every one present, and one after another the office bearers spoke. They seemed to have forgotten the matter before them and the delicate suggestion of Mr. Judkin. One rose to say that the minister had married him, and he never could forget the

marriage address; another had lost a little lad quite suddenly, and he did not think that his wife and he could have endured the trial had it not been for the minister's sympathy; a third had passed through worldly trials, and it was the minister's sermon that had kept him above water; and a fourth, who, as every one knew, had passed through fearful temptation, wished humbly to testify that he had not been that night an office bearer in a Christian church without the minister's help in time of trouble. Others looked as if they could have spoken, several murmured sympathy, and one deacon surreptitiously used his handkerchief, and at last Mr. Judkin rose again and proved himself a man worthy to lead and to guide a church.

"Brethren," he said, "I expressed the feeling that was in my mind, and I am thankful that I gave it expression, for it has relieved me, and it has done

good to you. I now withdraw what I said: I was a little discouraged. Brother Stonier is quite right, and he has braced us up; and if he clears off the deficit, for which we are all much obliged, I shall be very glad if you allow me, brethren, to repaint the church this fall, for the colors are getting a little faded, and I would like to do it as a sign of gratitude for what the minister was to my wife when our son was hanging between life and death." Mr. Judkin's example set the office bearers upon a new track, one offering to supply the Sunday-school with new hymn-books, about which there had been some difficulty; another declaring that if the mother church was going to be repainted, he would see that the mission church should also get a coat; a third offered to pay the quarter of a missionary's salary to take the burden off the minister's shoulders, and three other office bearers appropriated the remaining quarters, till at

last there was not a man who had not secured the right, personal to himself, of doing something, great or small, for the church, and every one was to do it out of gratitude to the minister for all he had been to them and all he had done for them during fifteen years. And finally Mr. Lovejoy melted all his brethren by a prayer, in which he carried both minister and people to the Throne of Grace, and so interceded that every one felt as he left the place that the blessing of God was resting upon him.

The week-night service was held on Wednesday, and, as a rule, was very poorly attended. On this week the minister had come down to his vestry with a low heart, and was praying that he might have grace to address Mr. Lovejoy and a handful of devout and honorable women without showing that he was discouraged himself and without discouraging them. There were days

in the past when the service had been held in the church, and Mr. Judkin used to boast in the city about the attendance; and then it descended from the church to the large hall; but of late the few who attended had been gathered into a room, because it was more cheerful to see a room nearly full than a hall three parts empty. The room was next door to the vestry, and the minister could tell before he went in whether the number would rise or fall above the average thirty. This evening so many feet passed his door, and there was such a hum of life, that he concluded there would be forty, which was a high attendance, and he began to reproach himself for cowardice and unbelief. He was looking out the hymns when the door opened, and Mr. Lovejoy came in with such evident satisfaction upon his gracious face that the minister was certain some good thing had happened. "Excuse me interrupting you," said

the good man, "but I came to ask whether you would mind going into the hall to-night? The room is full already, and more are coming every minute. I should not wonder to see a hundred, perhaps two," and Mr. Lovejoy beamed and quite unconsciously shook hands afresh with the minister.

"You may be sure that I shall be only too glad, but . . . what is the meaning of this? Do they know that I am preaching myself?" And the minister seemed anxious lest the people should have been brought in the hope of hearing some distinguished stranger.

"Of course, they know, and that is why they have come," responded Mr. Lovejoy with great glee; "no other person could have brought them, and if you didn't preach to-night, it would be the greatest disappointment the people ever had; but I must hurry off to see that everything is right in the hall," and in a minute the minister heard the

sound of many voices as the people poured joyfully from the room into the hall, and even in the vestry he was conscious of a congregation. As he was speculating on the meaning of it all the door opened again and Mr. Lovejoy returned.

"We hadn't faith enough," he cried; "we ought to have gone to the church at once. Brother Stonier said in his usual decided way, 'No half measures, into the church with you;' but I was afraid there would not be enough. I was wrong, quite wrong, the church will be nicely filled from back to front, for the people are coming in a steady stream—it's just great to see them. I'll come back for you when they are all seated; but give them time, it's not easy moving from one place to another as we've been doing to-night; but we'll not move another Wednesday, we'll just settle down in the church as in the

former days," and Mr. Lovejoy left the vestry walking on air.

When the minister went in the church was almost full, and he had some difficulty in giving out the first hymn, for it came upon him that his people had seen that he was discouraged and that this was a rally of affection. The prayer was even harder for him than the hymn, although his heart was deeply moved in gratitude to God and tender intercession for men. And then when he came to the address he threw aside what he had prepared, for it seemed to him too cold and formal, and he read the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Psalm slowly and with a trembling voice, and instead of commentary, he paused between the verses, and the people understood. When he read the last verse—"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,

bringing his sheaves with him"—he hesitated a moment, and then pronounced the benediction. After a minute's silent prayer he lifted his head and found the people still waiting. Mr. Judkin rose, and coming forward to the desk, thanked the minister audibly for all his work; and then they all came—men, women, and children—and each in his own way said the same thing; and the story went abroad that Richard Stonier, who came last and said nothing, had broken down for the first and only time in his life.

THE END.

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